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THE CAUCASUS, PERSIA, AND TURKEY IN ASIA

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JOURNEY

IN

THE CAUCASUS, PERSIA,

AND

TURKEY IN ASIA

By LIEUT. BARON MAX von THIELMANN

SECRETARY OF THE IMPERIAL GERMAN EMBASSY AT ST. PETERSBURG

DOCTOR JURIS, BERLIN

TRANSLATED

By CHARLES HENEAGE, F.R.G.S.

SECOND SECRETARY IN HER MAJESTY'S DIPLOMATIC SERVICE

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. I.

WITH MAP AND WOODCUTS

LONDON

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1875

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INTRODUCTION

BY THE TRANSLATOR.

The following considerations induced me to undertake the translation of Baron Max von Thielmann's book of travels in the Caucasus, Persia, and Turkey in Asia.

The enterprising nature of the journey, and the novel character of a great portion of the regions traversed.

The interesting geographical, historical, political, and social details contained in the work.

The desire to open up to my countrymen a new route of travel.

Apart from the valuable geographical and archæological information comprised in these volumes, the reader will hardly fail to peruse with interest the sketch given of the wars waged in the Caucasus, of the different tribes engaged in that warfare, and of the progress of a religious movement styled Muridism, which sprang up during the contest, and which is regarded as the most important event in the modern annals of Islamism.

An insight is given into the political division of the Caucasus, the nature of the Russian administration in

those districts, and the relations subsisting between the inhabitants of the soil and the Russian element.

A survey is made of the political condition of Persia, of the commercial relations of that country, with especial reference to the trade of Tabreez; also of the state of the Kurds under Turkish rule; and an account is given of the trade at Bagdad.

Pictures are drawn of eastern town-life in Tiflis, Tabreez, and Bagdad; and of Persian hospitality.

The description of the mausoleum of Sheik Sefi, near Ardebil, and of its unique treasures of old Chinese and Persian porcelain, pottery-ware, etc., will interest the admirer of Oriental china and enamels; and a receipt awaits the gourmet, who may now acquire the secret of the tschillaw—a delicate rice-pudding, regarded as the *chef d'œuvre* of culinary art in Persia.

The lover of nature should visit Mount Ararat and the Pass of Kasbek.

Baron Max von Thielmann disclaims all intention of writing a hand-book; but the love of travelling adventure, a predominant characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon race, and one to which Baron Max von Thielmann himself bears testimony, will prompt many ardent spirits to avail themselves of the information supplied in the course of this narrative, and notably in the final chapter, to seek 'fresh fields and pastures new;' and in the region, too, where Alexander sighed for more worlds to conquer.

In respect to the translation itself, I will only say that, whilst striving to adhere strictly to the sense of

the text, I have endeavoured to reproduce the ideas and feelings of the author, and to elucidate any passages, with the subject of which the general reader may, possibly, be less familiar than the historian or diplomatist.

With the foregoing comments—in so far as they relate to the work in the original language—I recommend the translation to the indulgence of the English-reading public.

CHARLES HENEAGE.

On board the 'Wizard,' R. Y. S.
ALGIERS: *March* 28, 1875.

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

A RESIDENCE of several months in St. Petersburg, during which period I contrived to master so much of the Russian language as it is given to a German possessing a normal larynx to acquire in so short a time, had matured a determination which I had formed, to travel over the more distant portions of Russia, and especially over the Caucasus. I was not blind to the fact that the trip required more perfect knowledge of the necessary routes than could be obtained by a simple glance at the guide-books of Murray or of Baedeker, which might suffice for an excursion amongst the Alps, or for a tour in Italy. I consequently sought materials to promote the object of my study. I soon discovered that these materials were scarcely to be met with in any available degree, and that no work existed which could be employed in the sense of a hand-book. Undoubtedly Monsieur Dubois de Montpéreux gives very detailed accounts of the Caucasus; but his work was written a long time pre-

vious to the recent era of pacification, at which period the country first became accessible to the traveller, and is therefore out of date. Haxthausen's 'Trans-Caucasus' is utterly useless, and Dumas' 'Voyage autour du Caucase' is a narrative on the whole far too untrustworthy to serve as a guide, although it contains extremely clever descriptions, frequently both striking and correct. Bodenstedt's work, however attractive to the reader, possesses no value for the traveller in quest of practical knowledge. The sources from which the necessary information was supplied which enabled me to undertake the trip were, a manuscript 'diary' of a Prussian officer, and a work by Professor Petzholdt on his journey through the Caucasus, the latter narrative well worthy the attention of all those who are desirous to make similar excursions. From these two sources, and also from the records of the Emperor of Russia's journey through Daghestan, in 1871, I sketched out a plan of my travels. The result showed that I was not deceived in my expectations. Two incidents occurred, which considerably lengthened my original plan, intended for a three months' tour; and these, in the end, prolonged the journey to nearly double the anticipated length. The first was the accidental circumstance of my coming together with a passionate admirer of the East, who for years had been acquainted with Oriental countries, and who strongly advised me not to return

home without first visiting the westernmost portions of Asia; the second was the result of a final deliberation with my travelling companions, in deference to whose wishes the trip was extended from the Caucasus through Persia. I then commenced my tour provided with all the travelling requisites, which previous experience of trips suggested as necessary, and accomplished, without encountering any dangers and with comparatively little difficulty, a journey through countries rarely visited by Europeans and scarcely ever by tourists. Should the following pages fall into the hands of one fond of travelling, and be the means of inducing him to visit these fair and distant lands, I wish him good luck, and hope that the book may serve to guide him on his way.

BARON VON THIELMANN.

thians—View from Pass of Latpari—Return—Lailaschi—Twischi—Departure from Kutais—Kwirila—Pass of Suram—Bjelogorie—Carts and Buffaloes—Suram—Borshom—Timothis-ubani and Daba—Ruins of a Monastery—Shooting Excursion—Sport in the Caucasus—Attack of Fever . PAGE 40

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MAP.

Caucasus, Persia, &c.	*at beginning*

Errata.

Page 9, lines 6 and 14, *for* Yemtschik *read* Yamtchik

„ 25, line 27, *for* Iwilsas-Mta *read* Twulsas-Mta

„ 26, „ 26, „ from the river Tschetschnia which falls into the Terek *read* from the Tschetschnia

„ 33, „ 13, „ Kwrrila *read* Kwirila

„ 35, „ 25, „ Alexandropol *read* Alexandrapol

„ 38, lines 2 and 3, *for* many of these suppositions *read* many of these distinctions

„ 39, line 1, *for* Swanithians *read* Swanethians

„ 2, „ Tuschians *read* Tuschs

„ 40, „ 16, „ Erivan „ Erivan

„ 61, „ 10, „ incongrous „ incongruous

„ 107, „ 10, „ in the Caucasus *read* of the Caucasus

„ 123, „ 1, „ valley of the Kuralies is here *read* valley of the Kura lies here

„ 137, „ 1, „ when we entered Borshom *read* when we left Borshom

„ 148, „ 1, „ Kurdes *read* Kurds

„ 151, „ 3, „ enfolded „ unfolded

„ 194, „ 1, „ which resolve themselves *read* resolving themselves

Pages 203, line 20, and 204, line 5, *for* Koords „ Kurds

SKETCH MAP OF BARON VON THIELMANN'S TRAVELS IN THE CAUCASUS &c.
WALACHIA
MEDITERRANEAN
SEA

CAUCASUS.

CHAPTER I.

ODESSA TO POTI.

Odessa—Sebastopol—Bachtchisarai—Journey to Yalta—Baidar Gate, or Pass of Phoros—Yalta—Livadia—Orianda—Alupka—Waterfall—Kertch—Coast of Caucasus—Soukhum Kaleh—Arrival in Poti—The Country of the Caucasus—Chief Mountain Range—Daghestan—Little Caucasus—Lowlands—Political Division of the Caucasus—Roads—Navigation—Railways—Population—Kartalinians—Tartars—Armenians—Mountain Population—Russians and Foreigners.

As previously agreed upon, I met my travelling companions, Von Wurmb and Von Reiswitz, on August 10, 1872, at Odessa. Their intention was to have proceeded thither from Berlin by Pest and Galatz, but no sooner had they arrived at Pest than they ascertained that communication by steamer was suspended between Galatz and Odessa, on account of the cholera. This circumstance obliged them to take a round-about course through Galicia, and to post over the Carpathian mountains about 140 miles, which gave them some insight into the nature of the enjoyments reserved for them later on. As for myself, I preferred

the journey from St. Petersburg *viâ* Moscow, with which latter town I was well acquainted, having been there several times before. I confined myself consequently to a visit to the Exhibition, which I found most interesting, and well worthy of the notice of my countrymen. In Kief, an extensive and beautifully situated city, I remained but one day. Our original intention was to have remained in Odessa till Monday, August 12, and then to take advantage of the steamer to the Crimea; but a thick fog setting in rendered everything in the town so dim and desolate that we determined to get on as quickly as possible, and to take our chance of fine weather in Sebastopol. At 4 P.M. we embarked on board the 'Taurida,' a Russian vessel belonging to the Black Sea Navigation Company —an old craft, and by no means the best on the line; but being not overcrowded, and the sea being calm, we felt we might count upon a comfortable night. At 5.30 P.M., after a slight collision with the bowsprit of another ship, our vessel left the harbour. The fog had considerably diminished, but the atmosphere was still damp and heavy, and insupportably close in the cabins below, so that we preferred remaining on deck as long as possible.

The weather was splendidly clear, and the next morning about 8 A.M. we sighted the yellow coast of the Crimea, first Cape Khersonesus with its lighthouse, and beyond that the black stony heights west of Sebastopol. An hour later we entered the bay, passing between two forts armed with formidable batteries,

erected in stories; the vessel then made a sharp turn to the right, and instantaneously the gigantic ruins of Sebastopol lay before us. There is perhaps no spot upon earth which after an interval of nearly twenty years so fully exhibits the spectacle of complete desolation as Sebastopol; whilst in Strasburg and Paris no vestige remains to mark the destructive effect of the siege, Sebastopol presents the same appearance as on the day after the last attack. Scarcely a house in the town has been rebuilt; every step is amongst ruins, and on the opposite side of the harbour long barrack walls, extending far into the distance, display rows of empty window places. The little animation which still exists is confined to the streets adjoining the landing-place of the steamers. There are here two hotels for foreigners to put up at. We chose the one kept by Herr Wetzel, and found tolerable, though not very roomy, accommodation there. The landlord, a German, formerly steward to the Russian officers' club, lamented bitterly the golden age, when 260 officers daily sat down to table—a loss not redeemed by the present high charges, and not inconsiderable number of foreign visitors. The weather being magnificent, we lost no time in engaging a carriage and guide to go round the town. Our Cicerone was a Jew, speaking every language abominably. In the following broken German he described the death of General Cathcart: 'War e grausser Monn, e gesuender; kuemmt er gegangen gefahren szu reiten, wird er geschossen, is er gekuemmen szu fallen, todt vom Pferde heruenter.' After ascending

some distance above the harbour, our route, which occupied seven hours, brought us to the Great Redan, where the parallels and approaches of the attacking party may be easily recognised: we then passed on to the Malakoff, the importance of which as the key to the Russian defence would hardly strike the unprejudiced observer. A small stone building and an insignificant tower mark this historic spot. Our road then continued to the edge of the plateau before Sebastopol, bringing us to the battle-field of Inkermann. Here a splendid view of the valley of the Tchernaya, and the picturesque mountain chains beyond, repaid us for our exertions during the heat of the day. The mill which the battle has rendered historical is still in existence, and close to it a small well, where we observed a Tartar girl veiled, drawing water—the first sign to us of Eastern customs. The English graveyards, which we passed on our way back, are unfortunately in a state of complete ruin. The stone fences have been destroyed, the tombstones in many instances rolled down and broken to pieces, and the monuments injured; whilst in every direction weeds have accumulated—a sad contrast to the well cared for Russian cemetery on the north side of the bay. The continued range of fortifications prevented us, even on the side next the sea, from making a complete circle, so we satisfied ourselves with going as far as the flag-staff on the southern extremity, and to the central bastion. A day's excursion to the fortifications will suffice for the ordinary tourist; but the military traveller, to whom a visit to these

historical localities will be of special interest, should devote several days to a detailed inspection of them; and for this purpose, as well as for a general tour in the Crimea, he will find Murray's 'Handbook for Russia' of great service.

We refreshed ourselves on our return with a delighful bathe in the harbour, and determined to devote the following day to an excursion to Bachtchisarai, the former residence of the Tartar khans. We had to choose between two routes; the one by Inkermann, and the other by the north side of Sebastopol. The latter has two disadvantages. In the first place it is necessary to cross the bay in a boat; and in the second —a circumstance not mentioned to us in Sebastopol— no proper conveyances can be obtained on the north side; only Tartar carts without springs, of very primitive construction, and with equally primitive drivers. Having no alternative, we got into one of these instruments of torture, which possessed a large hood, after the fashion of a Silesian cart, but no seats; and after driving for four hours and a half at an extremely slow pace, we arrived at Bachtchisarai, a distance of twenty English miles. The route presented little variety. At first the route followed the plateau near the sea, then turning shortly afterwards to the right it led us into a somewhat dreary valley, watered by a scanty rivulet. Occasional patches of willows, and here and there a village with gardens and old trees, lent some animation to the spot; but the most striking feature of the whole was the flocks of rollers (*Corracias garrula*), that mos

beautiful of European birds, often met with in the Crimea.

Bachtchisarai is not visible to the traveller until he is actually inside the town. Situated in a little narrow valley on the right hand corner of the road, it remains concealed to the last. The whole town consists more or less of one long street, at the end of which is the Khan-Sarai or Palace of the Khans. On each side of the street are small houses—one storey high, open in front like booths—containing a stall or workshop, and frequently both of these. The population is purely of Tartar origin, and with the exception of the Russian guardian at the palace, I do not recollect observing a single European face. From the entire absence of all elements of modern civilisation, the town has become imbued with a thoroughly oriental character, more so perhaps than the generality of towns in Turkey; and this is especially conspicuous from the circumstance that the edifices have all existed in the time of the last Tartar Khans, and have undergone no restoration since that period. We had told our driver to take u to the Palace of the Khans; but as our knowledge o Turkish was small, and his knowledge of Russian wa *nil*, it can hardly be wondered at if, following his usua custom, he turned off into a small side street to unhar ness and put up his horses. Unfortunately this stree was not large enough to let us pass, so that we were positively jammed in between two houses, and only managed to extricate ourselves after considerable time and some trouble. At last we arrived at the palace, and

1. BACHTCHESARAI.

To face p. 6, vol. i.

were certainly much impressed with our first view of it. Although neither remarkable for size or beauty of architecture, this edifice produces a lasting impression from its strange and motley appearance, its many balconies, gateways, and pavilions—its mosque and minarets—and its old shady trees in the garden. In marked contrast to the brisk, active movement in the street, a deep silence pervaded the dim passages of the palace, and although the atmosphere outside was sultry, an almost icy coldness prevailed in the Cemetery of the Khans. There is nothing particularly interesting in the interior of the palace, except a few remarkable rooms, which have served as a hall of justice, and as apartments for the ladies of the harem, amongst whom formerly was the beautiful Countess Potocka. The adjoining mosque is simple and unembellished, in common with all Turkish houses of worship, and the Tombs of the Khans are merely worthy of notice as historical remembrances of a dynastic family deposed in a very prosaic manner. I can hardly advise persons suffering from giddiness to ascend the minaret, as the view from above is not extensive and presents no new features. Our day's enjoyment would have remained incomplete without a 'diner à la Tartare.' Unfortunately our illusions were somewhat dissipated on finding the mutton tough, the rice without flavour, and the coffee indifferent, the price alone being worthy of a grand hotel. The lateness of the hour, as also the rainy weather, which in the meantime had set in, compelled us to give up our excursion to Tchufut Kalé, the town of the

Karaim Jews. We, however, made up for our disappointment as regards the anticipated magnificence of oriental cookery, by regaling ourselves with the beautiful fruits which are to be purchased at almost every house, and we loaded ourselves with souvenirs, consisting of pretty little objects—perfectly useless—made of leather and manufactured in the place at a very low rate (the days, alas! when the sword-blades of Bachtchisarai rivalled those of Khorassan are gone by!) after which with due resignation we remounted our instruments of torture. Night had fallen before we reached the harbour of Sebastopol, and with great difficulty we obtained a boat to take us across. On arriving at the hotel we received the startling intelligence that the 'Taurida,' instead of going to Yalta, had put back into the harbour with damaged engines, and that the passengers had monopolized all available conveyances in the town for the land journey. We fell back consquently, as a last resource, on the country vehicle, the telega.

In the course of this narrative I have endeavoured to give some account of the telega, as well as of the afflictions and dangers to which the unhappy traveller who rides in one is exposed. But I should own that any such description must necessarily be imperfect, for only those who have been jolted along for hundreds of versts over bad and indifferent roads can really know what the telega is.

Our telega, which had been ordered at the post-station to call for us at seven o'clock the next morning, did not arrive at the door of the hotel until ten A.M.

We squeezed ourselves into it as well as the deficiency of room would allow, and bade adieu to Sebastopol. We were little more than a few hundred yards beyond the gate on to the plateau, when a sentry pointed out to us that half the road was marked off for target practice, at the same time directing our yemtschick (postilion) to drive round so as to avoid the forbidden ground. Confiding in this information, we turned off from the road and proceeded over the open field, when suddenly a sound well known to us during the late war caught our ears, and a few seconds afterwards a cannon-ball struck the ground about fifty yards to our left, fortunately without causing our destruction. We gave the yemtschick to understand in a somewhat demonstrative manner that our desire was to get out of range of the firing as speedily as possible, and the horses appearing to understand the command, dashed round the rest of the dangerous territory at full gallop. The slope of the plateau, called the Sapun Mountains, which extend from Sebastopol to the Bay of Balaklava, was soon reached, and the historical bay itself, lying deep among rocks which shelter it from the winds blowing from the sea, remained on our right. Beyond the valley rises up the extensive chain of mountains forming the southern border of the Crimea. These mountains are very picturesque in appearance, full of ravines and valleys covered with luxuriant vegetation, which contrast favourably with the bleak yellow steppe and barren heights of Sebastopol. Our road first led into a little romantic valley; then ascending between thick

bushes alive with innumerable birds, especially rollers, it brought us to the first post-station, where we changed horses, and shortly afterwards to the valley, or rather the ravine, of Baidar, a little earthly Paradise, resplendent with green foliage and sheltered from inclement winds. Unfortunately, all villages in the East frequented by travellers do not convey the poetical associations attached to the place itself. This is the case with the village of Baidar, which is partly inhabited by Russian settlers, and which produced rather an insipid impression. The road then wound itself up the side of the mountains south of the valley, and reaching the second post-station brought us to the celebrated gate of Baidar. The view is one of the most marvellous in Europe. In the background the pleasant little valley gradually fades away into the distance, whilst before us, rising suddenly from a depth of 1,550 feet, the sea, encircled with huge fantastic rocks starting up almost perpendicularly, meets our gaze. The mountain defile over which the road passes leads into a small tunnel. To the traveller emerging from within the contrast is most striking, as the comparison of the two landscapes is unbroken by intervening scenery. Unfortunately for us our enjoyment was not destined to be unalloyed, for hardly had we time to rush down the zigzag road by which we had ascended, when a storm, accompanied by torrents of rain, set in, wetting us through and through, together with everything we had, and curtailing the enjoyment which would otherwise have been derived from an occasional glimpse

through the clouds of the splendid panorama before us. The road, which had been constructed by Prince Worontzoff, and which was, according to local conceptions, in tolerably good repair, continues its course amidst a luxuriant vegetation, with the sea on the right hand and steep mountains rising into the air on the left. Each nook and corner, each little side valley, presents, according to the description given to us, features agreeable to the gaze; but with this assurance we were compelled to remain satisfied. We of course imagined that on so frequented a road we should find something to eat at the post-houses; but not until we arrived at the last station but one could we obtain even tea and bread. The customary false assertions, as regarded the impossibility of obtaining horses—household words to every Russian traveller journeying by post—were repeated to us at the last station; and only after a decided demonstration on our part were we placed in a position to resume our journey. It was dark by the time we reached Yalta; but the clouds had disappeared, and a bright starlight night, fresh with a vegetation exhaling a thousand odours, consoled us for our disasters.

The next morning we awoke in not a very poetical mood. The sky was again cast over. Yalta emerged from amongst masses of fathomless dirt; and the Hotel de Yalta, the best in the place, could hardly be taken for such. Only once during the whole journey do I recollect having had to make shift with such a filthy place for night quarters, and that was in a cowshed in Kurdistan. There could be no question of an excur-

sion in the neighbourhood, so we passed the day in visiting the town, if the small locality can be so called, and in drying our wet things. Yalta has a future before it. Situated almost in the middle of the most picturesque region of the south coast, and possessing a good roadstead with favourable anchorage for ships, except during violent south-east winds, it must eventually become the port of embarkation for all those who may hereafter settle down in this magnificent district. After the example of Prince Woronzoff's splendid country seat at Alupka, which gave an impetus to the taste for country residences, innumerable villas belonging to the Russian aristocracy, and frequented not only in the spring and summer, but also during the winter, have started up in all directions around Yalta. The climate is similar to that of the Corniche between Nice and Genoa, and is highly beneficial to persons in delicate health, a circumstance which renders the estates doubly valuable. Anyone desirous to enjoy this beautiful country who is not the proprietor of a villa, or who has not expended some thousand roubles on a furnished residence for the season, will do well to wait for a few years until the projected bathing establishments and hotels, which are to be constructed on a grand scale, are completed in Yalta; for the present hotels, irrespective of their dirty condition, would hardly satisfy the most moderate requirements. The accommodation for bathing is also very primitive. The bathing establishment stands at the mouth of a small stream which discharges into the bay its fetid waters,

mingled with the nauseous reminiscences of the town. The separation of the sexes is effected by a row of cloths suspended from a cord. During the period of my stay these cloths were carried away by a storm, and the cord alone remained to designate the moral purpose to which it had been applied. There are no cafés, restaurants, reading-rooms, or pavements; on the other hand, an excellent performance of music by a Russian infantry band takes place every afternoon on the sea shore. But the traveller who has no intention of making a prolonged stay should not be deterred on account of these trifling deficiencies from visiting the south coast.

During the next two days we had the most superb weather for our excursions in the neighbourhood. Three country seats, Livadia, Orianda, and Alupka, form the chief attraction to strangers. The first, built by Count Potocki, and now in the possession of the Emperor, is situated in the immediate vicinity of Yalta, at a height of about five hundred feet above the level of the sea. The park, though only recently laid out, is in admirable condition, and extends down to the water's edge. It contains no actual palace, but a series of tolerably large country houses. Amongst these the one inhabited by the Czarewitch, constructed in the style of a richly-ornamented châlet, rises up most charmingly from amidst the dense verdure. At a higher elevation of some hundred feet, and distant about half an hour from Livadia, stands the villa Ereklik, signifying in the Tartar language a garden of plums, recently con-

structed for the Empress. Here her Imperial Majesty passes the summer months, sheltered from the scorching heat, considerably increased in Livadia by the reflection of the sun's rays on the water. Orianda, the property of the Grand Duke Constantine, situated lower down, lies close to the sea, behind Livadia. Two steep rugged promontories rise up on each side, almost entirely secluding the spot from the outer world, rendering it confined, and no doubt trying to the health during the summer heat. The château is built from designs by Schinkel, and carries with it the sober stamp of the late Emperor's reign—very many straight lines, and no ornamentation to relieve the four massive white façades. This style of architecture may possibly be adapted to a plain North German landscape, but it is not suitable to a country rich in the beauties of nature, and gifted with such luxuriant manifestations. On the other hand the garden is fully worthy of the spot, and offers countless beautiful features.

The pearl of country seats is Alupka, belonging to Prince Worontzoff. It lies about nine miles from Yalta, on the Sebastopol road, and, amongst other advantages, possesses an extremely clean little inn. Situated above the sea, at about the same elevation as Livadia, the château exhibits a character seldom met with in Europe. Its architecture is that of a massive gothic castle, adorned with turrets and coignes, surrounded in front by a magnificent terrace, and behind by a number of court-yards, in the style of the Middle Ages, the walls being covered with a profusion of ivy interspersed with

blooming creepers. In many respects the details are Moresque, and the mixture of two foreign styles, far from offending the eye, appears natural and in character with the surrounding scenery. The eye reposes with involuntary satisfaction upon the bold outlines of this noble edifice, constructed of light grey stone without ornamentation, and forgets the unwelcome impression conveyed by the stiff straight outlines of Orianda. The garden, worthy that of Orianda, offers a number of enchanting views of the sea coast and the mountains which tower above the château. The district between Alupka and Orianda, and also to the east of Yalta, is studded with unpretending country seats, almost hidden away amongst the dense foliage. To the west of Alupka also, as far as the gate of Baidar, similar country seats may be seen. The coast has not unfrequently been compared with the Riviera di Genova, in my opinion incorrectly, for their character is entirely different. In Italy everything is light and life. Sprightly villages and the fine old châteaux of the Genoese nobility follow upon one another. Nut-trees, pines, and occasional planes cast their shadows over the ground, while the olive groves deprive the light of its scorching power, though not of its splendour. Here, on the contrary, a deep silence prevails, whilst a luxuriant vegetation conceals the dwelling-place of man; on each practicable road lies here and there a scanty Tartar village, through the streets of which veiled women slip along.

Our second day was occupied with a visit to the waterfall in the mountains, the foam and spray of which

is visible from Yalta. We hired horses, small sinewy animals, which clambered along famously. These we hired from Tartars, who make a good business by it, and who alone amongst their countrymen in the Crimea attire themselves in the rich Levantine costume, which imparts to the wearers a most dandified appearance. The road passes Livadia, ascending through forests of beeches, succeeded by magnificent firs. The waterfall itself, in dry weather a mere thread, might from the copious rains of the last few days have almost vied with the Reichenbach Fall in the Bernese Oberland. The view in the background includes the Bay of Yalta, and is most picturesque. We descended a portion of the way by means of a so-called 'rattle,' which the horses did not appear to heed. In the evening we went on board the steamer which was to convey us to the Caucasus. She was called the 'Cesarevna,' a beautiful new vessel, fitted out with every accommodation for a several days' passage.

The number of passengers was not great. Some officers and officials out of the Caucasus, an elderly lady in Grusinian costume, and a French lady, the former proprietress of an hotel in the Caucasus, with her two daughters. At eight o'clock we weighed anchor, and soon the bright windows of Yalta were vanishing behind an immense rock jutting out into the sea. In the grey of the morning we were lying in Feodosia Roads. The mountains have now disappeared, and the barren yellow coast extends to Kertch, which we reached shortly after noon. The entrance into the harbour is effectually

closed by the new fortifications, under the cannon of which the navigation passes. A second channel at Yenikale (about four miles east of Kertch) divides the roads from the Sea of Azov. The actual harbour is only navigable for ships of light draught, and the 'Cesarevna' was obliged to plough her way through the mud for some distance with her keel before she could moor alongside the wharf. As the vessel did not leave again until evening, we had sufficient leisure for sight-seeing in the town. Two things struck me immediately, the number of German watchmakers, every third house containing one, and the Babel of tongues which prevailed in the market-place. A money-changer, who provided us with some small change, spoke fluently every European and some Asiatic languages. In the neighbourhood of Kertch, and especially on the peninsula of Taman, situated opposite to it, very valuable discoveries of antiquities, especially of old Grecian ornaments, have been made in the course of the last thirty years. The most beautiful specimens are undoubtedly in the Hermitage at St. Petersburgh, but there are sufficient of them remaining in Kertch to fill a small museum well worth seeing. A walk to the Hill of Mithridates, situated immediately in front of the town, will arouse very interesting associations, for this is the spot where Mithridates, when deserted by all his followers, and hemmed in by the Romans, finally surrendered himself to death in his palace. The entire hill, about three hundred feet high, is covered with fragments of pottery, like the Monte Testaccio. Here

may be found pieces of urns very prettily painted, which must have belonged to the best period of terra-cotta manufacture. An old ruin, described as having belonged to the great King of Pontus, can have no possible claim to so ancient an origin. The panorama includes the roads, alive with shipping (we counted no less than one hundred and twenty vessels), and extends far into Europe on the one side and into Asia on the other. Asiatic territory, represented here by the Peninsula of Taman, is, however, yellow and flat, and not a vestige of the Caucasus is to be seen. In the evening we weighed anchor, but although a small tug-boat strove its utmost to assist us in forcing our way through the heavy mud, it was only after considerable difficulty that we effected a passage; and we were very near being obliged to pass the night in the harbour.

The following morning found us already in the Bay of Novorossisk, where there is excellent anchorage ground, sheltered on every side—the only one to be found along the whole coast of the Caucasus, but unfortunately situated too far to the westward to be of service to traffic. There is only one road from here, viz., to the northward, leading into the territory of the Kouban. The place itself consists of a few huts inhabited by officials, military men, and a few settlers. After discharging cargo, consisting of a few sacks of meal, probably the week's provision for the inhabitants, the vessel continued her course. So calm was the sea that during the entire day we kept close to the coast. The mountains which rise immediately from the sea

had attained at Novorossisk a height of more than 1,000 feet. At Tuapse, a small settlement, which we passed at 2 P.M., they must be 3,000 feet high, and the setting sun shone upon steep rugged peaks dotted over here and there with patches of snow. In other respects all along the coast was still as death. Bushes and thickets stretched down to the water's edge; not a village or a hut was to be seen; occasionally the ruins of a destroyed fort. The tranquillity was almost unearthly; especially when we remembered that the mountains were formerly the home of numberless Tcherkesse tribes, who after their subjugation in 1864 expatriated themselves almost to the last man. For it is certain that not less than 400,000 souls migrated hence into Turkey, there to perish from misery and starvation. It can only be supposed that this was the result of a prolonged agitation on the part of Turkish agents, who must have held out to them the most brilliant inducements. It could not have been produced by fanaticism, as the tribes of Daghestan, zealous Mahometans, are in the present time in a very well to do condition under Russian rule, and do not appear at all to yearn after the bloody tyranny formerly exercised over them by Schamyl. It is to be regretted that such powerful elements—for such they were, according to the testimony of Russian officers—should be lost to the country. But civilisation required the sacrifice, and this part of the Caucasus has in consequence suffered by it. At the present time the country lies desolate. Nor would it be an advan-

tageous proceeding to endeavour to attract European settlers here, for the first generation would undoubtedly succumb to the fevers, which at the time when the virgin soil is being first brought into cultivation are doubly dangerous. It may, however, be reserved to future generations to witness this bounteously luxuriant territory blooming with produce.

Before we reached Pitzunda, a spot in the country of the former Dshigetes, night had set in, and the full moon was casting her light upon the mountains, of which some of the peaks attain the limit of perpetual snow. We were thus deprived of a view of the celebrated church, a master-piece of Byzantine art, which must formerly have possessed great treasures. In the grey of the morning we entered the Bay of Soukhum-Kaleh. The anchorage-ground is tolerably suitable, and the idea has already been entertained of continuing the Caucasus railway to this spot. The extreme point of the line is at present at Poti, which for maritime purposes is not a very convenient port. It would still, however, be a doubtful change for the better, as the roads of Soukhum-Kaleh are entirely unsheltered from the south wind. Here we saw first the costumes of the Caucasus. The town, if a few dozen wood houses can be so called, is principally inhabited by Abkhasians—an idle, thieving, deceitful, ill-famed population. Not improbably the lower classes of the community, as is frequently the case, are better than their reputation. Our vessel not being able to get up so far as Poti, on account of her draught of water, passengers and goods

had to be re-shipped on to a small flat-bottomed steamer, the 'Galubchik,' or 'Little Dove.' This gave us sufficient leisure to obtain a glance of the place, and to enjoy a refreshing bathe after the heat of the preceding day. Singularly enough there were two excellent bathing-houses in Soukhum-Kaleh, whilst this accommodation was entirely deficient in much-frequented Yalta. When we returned on board, we fell in with a singular family,—a Princess Eristaw, from Guria, with her children, dressed in the national costume of that place. Although the garments, as regards cut, displayed much taste, the entire costume would hardly have been a striking one, had not the children been all dressed from top to toe in scarlet, reminding us forcibly of the Prince of Arcadia in 'Orphée aux Enfers.' After unloading cargo, the 'Galubchik' got under weigh, as far as her weak old engines would admit of it, and although the sea was by no means rough, the motion of the ship was somewhat peculiar, owing probably to her flat bottom. This had its good side, for the saloon was much too small to accommodate the number of passengers at table. The stewards consequently waited until the necessary amount were sea-sick, which enabled the remainder, although very much pressed for room, to partake of a very indifferent repast. The vessel has its history. In 1860, when the Prussian Mission set out for Persia, the 'Galubchik' conveyed it from Batum to Poti; and on that occasion Professor Brugsch, the historian of the mission, indulged in the supposition that from the

moment of nativity the 'Little Dove' had never performed her ablutions. Twelve years have elapsed since that time, and during that interval the dirt had been steadily consolidating itself. The vessel, leaving Soukhum-Kaleh behind, soon passed the mouth of the Kodor, a small river rising near the Elburz, and watering the high valley of Tsebeldà, which is inhabited by Abkhasians. To the eastward the shore fell back a little, and the haze which had gathered in the air made it disappear altogether from sight. The coast line is moreover flat, and covered with virgin forests; the mountain chain rising up at some distance from the shore.

The clouded atmosphere prevented us from seeing the Elburz, although visible from the sea at a point between Soukhum and Poti. Its peculiar position behind the chief mountain range renders it however invisible from the land on the south side. To the north its snowy crest is visible far into the steppe, and must present an astounding spectacle to travellers coming from the sea of Azov, whose eye for the first time meets this gigantic wall, topped by its lofty dome, lit up in the early rays of the morning sun. In the meantime the sultriness increased, and with it the number of those who brought their sacrifices to Neptune. Towards 4 P.M. the white lighthouse of Poti appeared in sight, and as if to greet us on our arrival in Asia, countless shoals of dolphins, which until then, we had not noticed, danced merrily round the ship. The view of Poti was not poetical. In the roads a few sailing vessels which

were obliged to lie very far out on account of the shallow water; beneath us the brackish water which the Rion brings down to the sea, and which forms at the mouth of the river a circle of white slime; and on the shore some low wooden houses; add to this the malaria from the marshes which hovers over this most unhealthy of all human settlements. The bar at the mouth of the Rion is so dangerous that even our flat-bottomed vessel had to be steered over it with the greatest precaution. We steamed a few hundred yards up stream, and brought up close to the ruins of the Old Turkish Castle. The first thing which struck us on stepping upon this purely Asiatic ground were droschkies, which no town in Europe need have been ashamed of. Elegant carriages, good horses, and on the box a wild-looking coachman, in the Mingrelian costume, with a great dagger in his girdle. Their services were, however, almost superfluous, for the few inns which Poti boasts of are situated near to the river. The 'Hotel Jacquot' and 'Hotel Nouveau' contest the precedence; we selected the former, and found very tolerable accommodation there.

If I now proceed to say a few words about the Caucasus from a *geographical* and political point of view, my object is solely to give the reader some data to go upon in order that he may understand the book. A tolerably exhaustive description would, apart from the limits which it would occupy, be beyond my reach, as no compilation exists reviewing the works of different authors based on statistical data supplied by the government. Moreover such a production would require years of study on the spot. The reader, who from a statisti-

cal point of view, is desirous to obtain more precise information, should, if acquainted with the Russian language, consult an admirable work ('Russian Military Statistics') compiled by staff officers, under the direction of General Obrutschew. From a geographical point of view, the staff map (five versts), is the best authority; ethnographical and physiographical descriptions must be sought for amongst different works.

The problem of the Caucasus commences with its name. No etymologist has as yet been able to establish a certain hypothesis in regard to its signification. So far is clear that the primary syllable stands in direct affinity with the Persian word Kuh, meaning mountain. The Oriental however, is accustomed to include under one denomination only so many mountains as the eye can compass at one time; and thus the Caucasus is only known to him by name in parts, that is to say as applying to what lies within his immediate sphere of action. He does not understand or appreciate the notion of mountain chains in their entirety, and this conception is only occasionally designated by Arab geographers as the 'mountain of languages.' As with the name, so it is with the subject. In the Caucasus those who can give intelligence respecting the entire country are few, the generality being merely able to supply information connected with their immediate localities. Every atlas shows the general position of the Caucasus range, but with the almost universal error that it is represented as a gigantic wall extending from the sea of Azov to the Caspian, which induces the traveller to believe that glaciers and fields of perpetual snow exist on the peninsula of Taman. But this delusion speedily vanishes when the traveller finds that the steamer continues its course an entire day by the side of green hills and low mountains. The superficies of the Caucasus may be divided into three, or, in the event of Daghestan being regarded separately, into four parts.

1. The principal mountain chain from the peninsula of Taman to the Tsebeldà, the high valley feeding the two sources of the Kodor which runs into the sea, not far from Soukhum-Kaleh. This part of the Caucasus ascends gradually from the

north-west, and increasing more or less regularly, attains at its south-east extremity a height of from 6,000 to 8,000 feet, above which certain peaks tower some thousand feet higher still, without in most cases, however, attaining the limits of perpetual snow. In the direction of the sea it falls off rugged and abrupt, whilst to the north a widely ramified hilly country extends itself between it and the Kouban. It thus sends forth to the sea only unimportant rivulets, whilst the North Foreland is intersected by a great number of streams of considerable size, mostly flowing due north. Since the emigration of the Tscherkesse tribes the country has mostly remained unemployed; virgin forests fill the valleys, and amongst the upper affluxes of the Kouban roves that rare animal, the wild bull.

2. From the Tsebeldà to the Pass of Kasbek, the mountain chain presents an essentially different character. The crests attain the limit of perpetual snow, which lies here at an elevation of 12,400 feet; and but few passes transect the line of mountains. On the other hand the peaks of this gigantic range, as well as those of the mountains immediately next to it, soar up to an altitude unknown in Europe. Thus in the north, the Elburz reaches an elevation of 18,526 feet; the Dychtau and Koschtantau, 17,000; Kasbek, 16,546; south of the latter, Uschbà (near to Elburz), the same height, whilst at the sources of the Ingur, the Tzchenis-Tzchali, and the Rion, a complete chain extending from the Tetnuld (the Jungfrau of the Caucasus), to the Adai-Choch (or Iwilsas-Mta), which lies in the principal range, attain an elevation exceeding 15,500 feet. These heights naturally abound in glaciers. From the pass of Latpari, in Swanethia, thirty such glaciers may be seen, of which ten are primary ones. A striking characteristic feature distinguishes nevertheless this region from other mountainous districts, such as the Bernese Oberland, or the Bernina Group, in Switzerland. The Caucasus chain, with the exception of a short bend towards the south, at the source of the Ardon, continues in a straight line, and consequently no extensive seas of ice exist, such as are frequently

met with in Switzerland. The side chains, with the exception of the above-mentioned snow-mountains, Elburz, etc. etc., attain a much inferior elevation, and glaciers are seldom met with, as for instance on the Laila Mountains, between the Ingur and the Tzchenis-Tzchali. What forms a still more striking contrast as regards Switzerland is the complete absence of lakes. The declivities of this mountain region towards the sea and the Colchian lowlands, are filled up by the valleys of the Kodor, the Ingur, the Tzchenis-Tzchali, and the Rion; the Ljachwa and the Aragwa flow into the valley of the Kura. All these rivers pass through a mountainous foreland, rich in luxuriant vegetation, and connected with the mountains in the south by the Suram chain, which forms the watershed between the Rion and the Kura. Towards the north the country falls off somewhat rapidly into the steppe; the many parallel valleys which lead to the Kouban, the Kuma, and the Terek are chiefly barren and desolate.

3. East of the Kasbek the principal range breaks off into two branches. One running NE., and separating the valley of the Argun from the Andi Koissu; the other—the main branch—continuing SE. in the original direction. Between the two lies Daghestan. The former, at its commencement, comprises mountains of still very considerable height, containing glaciers; at a further stage it descends, and, like a steep wall, cuts off the highly situated plateau of Daghestan, from the river Tschetschnia, which falls into the Terek. The south-east branch, however, retains as far as the region of Schemacha the not inconsiderable elevation of 8,000 to 10,200 feet. Yet it seldom reaches the limits of perpetual snow, though, at the sources of the Samur, and in the Bazardshuzi, it rises to the height of 15,100 feet. The rivers of the northern branch flow northward to the Terek, through a richly forested country; those of the southern branch, the abrupt slope of which is covered with virgin forests, flow into the Kura. Amongst them are the Alazan and others, none of which are very important. The plateau of Daghestan, situated

between the two branches is, singularly enough, almost entirely devoid of vegetation.

4. It will be more appropriate to consider Daghestan as a country exclusively distinct, for it differs materially in its ground lines from the other countries of the Caucasus. It forms a high plain, gradually declining from the two principal chains towards the Caspian Sea. Volcanic action has rent it violently asunder, displacing individual portions; and canals thus created are furrowed out by strong currents of water with such accuracy in many places that, viewed from an altitude, the country resembles the model-relievo which illustrates a geological lecture. The four principal watercourses—all designated Koissu, and distinguished from one another by the different districts whence they spring—unite together, and, under the name of Sulak, flow into the Caspian Sea, into which a fifth river, the Samur, likewise conducts the waters of the southern portion of Daghestan.

5. South of the Caucasus rises a widely ramified chain of mountains, principally known under the name of Little Caucasus. This is connected with the Caucasus by the chain of the Suram Mountains, though separated from it by the valleys of the Rion and the Kura. It may be divided into two groups; one central, encircling Lake Goktscha like a volcano its crater; and the other a long straggling tract of mountain-land, widely ramified, stretching NW. from the former to the Black Sea. The first group—several crests of which attain the snow-line, although there are no glacier districts—discharges its waters through a multitude of lesser streams northward and eastward into the Kura, southward into the Arax, which latter stream divides it from the high plateau in Persia. This plateau seldom exceeds 10,300 feet. The Arax is almost exclusively a tributary of the Kura, and after having left the latter, traverses a long ravine. Entirely unconnected with these two groups, two gigantic mountains confront one another in the south—the barren inhospitable Alagoez, 13,436 feet high, and the majestic Ararat, 16,916 feet high, with its twofold crest and perpetual white crown.

6. The lowlands to the north of the Caucasus, those of the Kouban in the west, and those of the Terek in the east, present essentially the same characteristic features—hilly wooded steppes, with a fertile though mostly virgin soil; whilst the lowlands of the Rion and the Kura, on the contrary, differ entirely from one another. The country of the Rion, the Sacred Plain of Colchis, whence Jason brought home the Golden Fleece, is the picture of the most luxuriant fertility. It yields rich harvests, even to the primitive plough of the indolent Mingrelian peasant, and produces splendid forests on each uninhabited spot of land. The flat country along the Kura is, on the contrary, bleak and desolate. The fault does not lie with the soil, which, with plentiful irrigation, at present only practicable along the sides of the mountains, proves very fertile, but with the parched and arid winds of Central Asia. In former ages a widely ramified system of canalisation replaced natural irrigation; but this has been destroyed by the Persians, and in modern times it has neither been restored nor has the country been repopulated.

The political position of the Caucasus is still distinct, befitting the widely different circumstances which sever it from Russia Proper. It possesses a Lieutenant, an army under his immediate command, and a separate financial administration. The principal organic laws of the Russian Empire have recently been introduced into the country, with such modifications as circumstances have called forth, and universal military service is imminent. Tiflis is the seat of central authority, under the Grand Duke Michael, the present Lieutenant, brother to the Emperor. The highest officials are Baron Nicolai, Chief of the Civil Administration, and Prince Swjatopolk-Miraki, Chief of the General Staff of the Army of the Caucasus. The country is divided into five governments, irrespective of several territories placed under military rule, a result of the permanently warlike condition existing up to within the last few years. The provinces consist of

1. The government of Stavropol. This comprises the north-east portion of the steppe, and possesses a superficies of

5,992 square miles, with a population, according to the census of 1867, amounting to 371,000 inhabitants.

2. The territory of the Kouban Cossacks, situated between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov, *i. e.* between the principal mountain chain as far as the Elburz and the government just mentioned above. Superficies, 7,658 square miles; population in 1867, 600,000 souls; capital, Jekaterinodar, on the Kouban. Here the last battles were fought with the Tscherkesse tribes, and at the present time the population has, not improbably, been greatly diminished in consequence of the mass emigration of these tribes. The administration, in common with that of the following territory, is mixed, the soil being cultivated and the army supplied by the Cossacks of the Kouban, who form by far the greater portion of the Russian population. This system, based on the continual invasion of unruly neighbours, must, however, gradually disappear, a pacific condition of things having been secured.

3. The territory of the Terek Cossacks, 5,232 square miles, 450,000 inhabitants; capital Wladikawkas on the Terek, at the entrance of the Kasbek Pass. This territory comprises the lowlands of the Terek, and the northern declivity of the principal mountain chain, the so-called Tschetschnia. This has undoubtedly been the most tried territory of the Caucasus. For since the first settlement of the Cossacks, dating back to the time of Peter the Great, and to a still more remote period, a continual state of warfare on a small scale had prevailed, until a final crisis was reached in the exasperated conflicts which took place between the years 1839–59.

4. The territory of Daghestan, 2,422 square miles, 450,000 inhabitants, completely subjugated in 1859 by the final defeat of Schamyl, and since that time entirely tranquil; capital, Temir-Chan-Schura, generally designated for the sake of abbreviation Schura. The boundaries of this territory are the natural frontiers of Daghestan, except in the south, where the Khanate of Kuba, subdued long ago, has been added to the government of Baku.

5. *The* government of Tiflis, 3,756 square miles; popula-

tion, 650,000 souls; situated in the very heart of the country. The western boundaries are formed by the watershed, between the Rion and the Kura; the northern (with a slight deviation at the Kasbek, and to the east of it), by the principal mountain chain, extending from the sources of the Ljachwa to the town of Nuchà; the south-eastern by a line drawn obliquely across the Kura Steppes, with a wide bend towards Tiflis, up to the vicinity of the north-west corner of Lake Goktsha; the south-western by the watershed between the Kura and the Arax; and finally by the Turkish frontier. No portion of the country exhibits such diversity of physical features as this government. To the north are the wild mountains of the Kasbek Pass; to the north-east the sacred valley of the Alazan, and Kachetia, the chief wine-growing district; to the east the barren steppe; in the centre the romantic Grusia; and finally the monotonous high plain stretching along the Turkish frontier. Tiflis, the capital of the country, lies in a central position on the banks of the rapid Kura, and must now possess a population of nearly 100,000 inhabitants.

6. The government of Kutais comprises the entire territory surrounding the sources of the Rion and the Ingur; it possesses a population of 650,000 inhabitants, and a superficies of 1,745 square miles; and is, relatively speaking, by far the most densely populated government. As regards scenery it is the most picturesque; the plains are luxuriantly fertile; and the mountains are covered with thick forests extending to the principal chain, which is occasioned by the moist winds blowing from the Black Sea.

It is evident that no portion of the country possesses so grand a future as this government. Traversed over its entire length by a railway, it appears destined to become the wood and grain emporium of the Black Sea. Two obstacles alone present themselves; the indolence of the inhabitants, and the pestilential nature of the climate—very pernicious to Europeans—neither of which offers an insuperable impediment.

7–8. The southern declivities of the principal chain facing

the Black Sea are still divided into two small districts under military rule; that of Soukhum-Kaleh extending westward from the river Ingur to Pitzunda, comprising 620 square miles, and a population of 66,000 inhabitants; and that of Tschornomoria, which includes the remainder of the coast line, and which is almost uninhabited.

9. The government of Erivan embraces the Russian portion of the Arax district extending westward to the Turkish frontier, and to the east and north-east to a line drawn from Lake Goktscha as far as the town of Ordubat on the Arax, and northward to the government of Tiflis. Its superficies is 2,324 square miles, and its population consists of 436,000 souls. Its characteristic feature is that of a dry barren highland; but wherever water exists in sufficient abundance, very fertile districts may be found. The town of Erivan is unimportant.

10. The government of Jelissawetpol lies eastward of the preceding government, and of that of Tiflis. It is bounded on the north by a small portion of the principal chain; on the south it touches on the confines of Persia; and on the east, a line commencing between the towns of Nuchà and Schemachà, and running due south divides it from the government of Baku. Its superficies is 3,738 square miles, with a population of 503,000 souls. The capital formerly called Guendsha is unimportant. On the other hand Nuchà, the centre of the silk industry in the Caucasus, is steadily progressing. This government offers the same contrasts as Tiflis, barren steppes in the lowlands, and in the mountainous districts well-irrigated and highly cultivated valleys.

11. The government of Baku (3,276 square miles, with a population of 486,000 inhabitants) extends to the Caspian Sea from the confines of Daghestan, and from those of the last-mentioned government. It possesses in the immediate vicinity of the capital the only good natural harbour on the Caspian; and even Schemachà, the second town in the government, although unfortunately destroyed periodically by earthquakes, is the centre of a tolerably important industry. In

the heart of the government extensive barren steppes abound; but the district of Kuba, situated on the north, as well as the district of Lénkoran, the most southern point of the entire Trans-Caucasus, is on the contrary fertile and rich in forests.

Communications in the Caucasus owe their development to the present age. The Russian Government, being thoroughly aware that every mile of practicable road replaces a battalion of soldiers, has laboured zealously to strew the Caucasus with a network of roads, and has so far succeeded that nearly every town is attainable by mail coach—an important undertaking when borne in mind that the Oriental is ignorant of all means of communication save the roads for the caravans; in other words, mere lines over which for centuries past all intercourse has moved without a stone lying accidentally in the way being displaced. It must not be supposed that the roads in the Caucasus can equal our macadamised *chaussées*; but they are in sufficiently good order to admit of travelling being rendered comfortable in the season, and possible in the bad time of year. I have devoted some attention in the concluding chapter to describing the special peculiarities of the Russian system of posting, and will therefore only now give a brief survey of the different high roads. These are:

1. The high road leading from the Sea of Azov to Tiflis, the most important approach to the Caucasus. It starts from Rostow, on the Sea of Azov, traverses the steppe, and passing by Stavropol, Georgiewsk, and Mozdok, reaches the foot of the mountain chain near the point Wladikawkas, the key of the Caucasus (or, as it is literally called, the 'Conqueress' of the Caucasus). From Stavropol it sends out an important branch to Jekaterinodar, the capital of the Kouban, and lesser branches to the famous watering-places, Pjetigorsk and Kisslowodsk, as well as to the fortress of Naltschik. The branch roads leading to the Caspian Sea are enumerated lower down. At Wladikawkas, the road which from this point bears the title of 'Grusinian Military Road,' enters into the narrow rocky valley of the Terek, continues with steep ascent to the awful chasm of Dariel, and between the stations of Kobi and Mleti

crosses the principal chain of the Caucasus at an elevation of 8,215 feet. It subsequently follows the valley of the Aragwa as far as Mtzchet, and then enters, a few miles before Tiflis, the valley of the Kura. The first half of the road is a mere pathway over the steppe, and but little idea is entertained of converting it into a road, as the railway from Rostoff to Wladikawkas is already in course of construction. The latter portion of the road, leading over the mountains, might, as regards condition, equal the best roads in the Alps.

2. The road from the Black Sea to Tiflis. It commences at Maran (Orpiri) on the Rion, which point can be reached by the small river-steamers from Poti, and leads past Kutais to the station, Kwrrila, at the foot of the Suram Pass, which it crosses at a height of 3,627 feet, between the stations of Bjelogorie and Suram. It then runs along the left bank of the Kura to Mtzchet, passing Gori, where it joins the Grusinian Military Road. It is officially called the 'Imeretinian Military Road.' The condition of this road is also good, but the time for its utility has gone by, the railway which follows the same route being in full operation.

3. The road from Bakú to Tiflis. It starts from the Caspian Sea, crossing the eastern branches of the main chain to the town Schemachà, a centre of industry, and continues its course, at one time traversing the steppe, at another the lower mountain ridges, past Nuchà and Zakataly to Signach and Tiflis. Its condition is somewhat primitive, and except where it passes along the slope of a mountain, but little attempt at construction has been made.

4. The road from Tiflis to Persia first descends into the valley of the Kura, then dives southward into the romantic valley of the Akstafa, and crosses at the end of this the Pass of Pambak, 7,121 feet in height (called Kimirli, or 'Ass's Back'). Immediately afterwards it reaches Lake Goktscha, situated 6,340 feet above the level of the sea; thence passing Erivan, it continues to the valley of the Arax, and leads by Nachitschewan to Dshulfa, the frontier town of Persia. The level portion of this road is not precisely in model condition,

whilst the portion between the valley of the Akstafa and Erivan has been lately paved. In the autumn of 1872 only the portion from Jellenowka on the lake to Erivan was deficient.

These four great roads form the foundation upon which the entire actual network of roads has been constructed. The two former principally assist communication with the interior of Russia, the latter two with Persia and the countries east of the Caspian Sea. The adjoining roads are as follows:

5. Between the Grusinian and Imeretinian Military Road, that already mentioned from Stavropol to Jekaterinodar, on the Kouban, with a southern branch to the fortress of Maikop; and also a road from Jekaterinodar to Jeisk on the Sea of Azov, by Temrik to Taman (opposite Kertch), and to Novorossisk on the Black Sea.

6. Between the Imeretinian and Erivan road: branches in the Colchian Lowlands to Zugdidi in Mingrelia and Ozurgeti in Guria; further on from Suram by Borshom and Achaltzich (in the neighbourhood of the watering-place Abastumau) to Achalkalaki, from Delidshan in the valley of the Akstafa to Alexandropol; from Achty to Daratschitschach, a sunny spot in the mountains; from Erivan to Etschmiadzin, seat of the Armenian Patriarch; and from Dshulfa, a place on the frontier, to Ordubat.

7. Between the Erivan and Bakù roads: a branch from Akstafinsk by Jelisawetpol (Gindska) to Schuscha in the Karabagh, as well as from that place further on over the mountains to Nachitschewan, the latter portion not being completely finished in 1872; a road from Schemachà southward through the steppes by Saljany to Lenkoran on the Caspian Sea; and finally the short portion connecting Jelisawetpol and Bakù together near Nuchà; and a branch which runs from Signach up to the valley of the Alazan (Kachetia) to the village of Achmeti; the small portions from Tiflis to the sunny spot Kadshory and to Bjelyj Klutsch.

8. The communications which lie between the Grusinian and Bakù roads are of more importance, as they occupy in

some degree an independent position, and as a considerable trade is carried on by means of them. There are the following lines: from Astrachan by Kizljar, Temirchanschura, Derbent, and Kuba to Bakù; a branch from Scholkozawodskaja (south of Kizljar) to Mozdok; and a second branch from this by Groznaja to Wladikawkas; and finally the short portion from a point north of Temirchanshura to the port of Petrowsk. The importance of these communications rests on this, that on the one hand, by Mozdok, they provide a direct line from the Sea of Azov to the Caspian Sea, and on the other hand they offer by Wladikawkas and Groznaja the most expeditious route from Tiflis to those seas; and for communication with the countries situated on the Wolga the latter road is notably of paramount importance.

The remaining roads in the country are not employed for mail coaches, and the traveller is thrown back upon that very precarious means of conveyance—a hired vehicle; rendered additionally precarious from the circumstance that roads, which in this country have been once laid out for passenger traffic, must not be supposed to continue in that condition for ever afterwards. In illustration of the above assertion it may be mentioned that the road which in 1871, the emperor followed through Daghestan is at the present time unserviceable, and the circumstance that we should have pursued the Imperial route between Alexandropol and Etschmiatzin without encountering some disaster may be ascribed to little less than a miracle.

River navigation in the Caucasus is next to nothing. On the Rion it appears to have been discontinued on the occasion of the opening of the railway; and on the Lower Kura only small barges can ply. Strangely enough, this appears to have been quite different in past ages; for we learn from Greek authors that both the Rion and the Kura have been highways of commerce up to the Suram mountains. The traffic on both seas hemming in the Caucasus is, however, now very important. On the Black Sea this is concentrated at Poti, notwithstanding the great drawbacks arising from a defective har-

bour. Steamers sail once weekly in summer, and once fortnightly in winter, for Kertch and Odessa, calling at Soukhum-Kaleh, and for Trebizonde and Constantinople, calling at Batum. Besides this, a brisk trade is carried on by sailing vessels. On the Caspian Sea two steamers in the summer time leave Astrachan weekly for Bakù, calling at Petrowsk. From Bakù a sailing vessel starts for Persia. All traffic must of course be suspended during the winter months on the northern portion of the sea.

The Caucasus has already been in possession of railways for two years. In the year 1867, a concession was granted for the Poti-Tiflis line. In 1871, the first portion from Poti to the foot of the Suram mountains was open to traffic, and in 1872 the remainder of the line was in operation. Almost every obstacle, which could impede the construction of a railway, had been overcome. Starting from Poti, more than eighteen miles of marshy forest land, the fatal miasma of which carried off workmen by hundreds, had been worked through. This was succeded by rapid streams which required bridging over; and finally a mountain was crossed, where—to avoid expensive tunnelling, frequent recourse was had to gradients of 1.20, an unheard-of occurrence in Europe. The difficulties were nevertheless surmounted, and the line, although at great working expenditure, is in a condition to meet the demands of traffic. A second line from Rostoff to Wladikawkas, is in course of construction. The greater portion of it runs across the steppe, and will therefore soon be in operation. This line, when completed to Petrowsk—which is the present intention of the government—will be of greater service than the first to direct communication with Russia and the interior, as it is not beset by difficulties in regard to construction, and should bring to the main line a large accession of goods traffic. This route would also render accessible during the entire year the countries bordering the shores of the Caspian Sea, whilst the Wolga, hitherto the channel of communication with Russia, is scarcely open to navigation six months. Further projects for constructing lines from Petrowsk to Per-

sia, *viâ* Bakù, in connection with the railway system devised by Baron Reuter, the Fermier-General of that country, are being contemplated; also lines from Tiflis to Bakù, and from Wladikawkas to Tiflis, *viâ* the Kasbek Pass. The two former, though easy of construction, would scarcely prove lucrative sources of investment to capitalists whilst the latter, although possessing favourable traffic expectations, could not be built without great cost. The following is the position as regards gradients: one of 1.38½ (the maximum gradient on the St. Gothard railway), would be sufficient on the south side; but on the north side in a narrow ravine, which cannot be turned or evaded, between the stations of Lars and Kasbek, a difference of level amounting to 2,000 feet on 16 versts (or 10⅝ English miles), must be surmounted, or a tunnel cut of eight versts in length. It is not improbable that this project will remain long unexecuted.[1] A report appeared lately in the newspapers that a concession had been granted for a railway from Tiflis to Tabreez, *viâ* Erivan. Even if the country from Erivan to Tabreez presented no material obstacles, the route between Tiflis and Erivan on the line of the present road would still be out of the question for this purpose, and only at a very great expense, which would barely be covered by the traffic, could Erivan possibly be reached through the valleys of the Chram and its tributaries to Karakliss, and thence by means of vast tunnels through the valley of the Abaran.

The population of the Caucasus demands a special study. We Europeans are wont to represent all those denominated Caucasians or Tscherkesse, as a handsome chivalrous people. The men imbued with burning hatred for the Russian invaders; submitting with reluctance to their oppression. The women, ideals of beauty, flying to the harem of the Turk to elude the accursed despotism of the stranger. It is certainly an ungrateful task to destroy so poetical an illusion; but, were I to pay strict regard to truth, I must avow that no such ideal exists, or indeed ever has existed. In the first place it is

[1] Since writing the above a change has occurred. *Vide* Notes to the Fourth Chapter.

erroneous to cast into the same mortar Tscherkesse, Circassians, Georgians, Caucasians, and the like. Many of these suppositions do not in reality exist; and if in Europe ideas of a similar kind have been introduced, they have been chiefly errors. Moreover the population of the plains is in the Caucasus divided into at least four entirely distinct groups, and the number of different tribes which comprise the mountain population, and which are often wholly unconnected with one another, is simply legion. Ethnographical descriptions of the Caucasus must thus be restricted to a disquisition of individual types; for no type common to all exists. The division which is founded on the most natural basis is that which separates the population of the mountain from that of the plain. The Russians, the conquerors of the country, together with the colonists and strangers who have been attracted thither, represent a third element.

Amongst the inhabitants of the plain the Kartalinian tribes, representing the most ancient element of civilisation in the Caucasus, are the first which should be mentioned. Under this denomination are included numerous tribes, descendants of the ancient Iberians, who speak a language called Kartli, or more generally Kartuli, common to all, though possessing very different dialects, and who in the Middle Ages, were the real masters of the district of the Rion and Upper Kura, as far as the influx of the Alazan. The tribes are:—

1. Grusians or Grusinians; by Europeans, also denominated Georgians. They call themselves Kartli, and occupy the district east of the Suram Mountains, between the principal chain and the watershed of the Arax, as far as the height of Zakataly.

2. Imeretians, west of the Suram mountains to the river Tzchenis-Tzchali.

3. Mingrelians between the latter river, the Rion, the Ingur, and the Black Sea.

4. Gurians between the Rion and the frontier of Turkey. The Laz, a neighbouring Turkish tribe, is closely connected with them.

5. Some mountain tribes, as for instance, the Swanithians, on the Upper Ingur and Tzchenis-Tzchali, and the Tuschans, Pschaws, and Chewsurs at the sources of the Alazan and the Jora. The above-named tribes formed in the early middle ages a mighty dominion, the king of which resided at Mtzchet, near Tiflis. Through hereditary division of territory and unfortunate wars with the Persians and Turks, the country so far fell into decline that in the commencement of the present century, the king of Grusia, Kachetia, and Imeretia, a scion of the ancient race of the Bagratides, voluntarily surrendered himself to Russia. As a natural consequence of this event the rulers of Mingrelia and Guria were 'mediatised.' At the present time these tribes, numbering about 900,000 souls, all Greco-Christians, are in a very well to do condition, under the Russian sceptre, and do not in any way desire to return to their former state of independence, when each Turkish Sultan or Persian Shah made war upon them at will, burned down their villages, converted to slavery the male population, and carried away the women to the harem. Their character bears in general a mediæval stamp. The nobility were chivalrous, though without culture and deficient in energy. The common man, who lived in a vile subjection, was idle and deceitful. The two orders have now advanced in development; the nobles have acquired knowledge, and the people, though reluctantly, have begun to exert themselves. One of the qualities which distinguish them most is their passion for wine; but as they can endure large quantities without being intoxicated, the harm done to them is not so great. Mention will be made hereafter of the beverage itself. They are also fond of singing; but the performance is hardly pleasant. Their language sounds powerful, though harsh, the syllables Tzch and Schch playing a great part in it. For writing, the Grusian dialect is the most in use. The alphabet, composed in the 6th century by Saint Mesrop, presents two phases. The church alphabet, called Chutzuri, has lapidary letters, similar to the Old Armenian, but is only employed for ecclesiastical purposes; whilst the Mchedruli, the

present orthography, is neat and full of curved flourishes. The costume differs with each individual tribe. The notables, when not in European attire, wear, almost universally, the so called Tscherkesse dress.

The tribes of Turco-Tartar origin form the second principal group. They nowhere live so closely together as the Kartalinians, and are found scattered throughout the entire Caucasus. Their generic name is Tartar, but the common Russian, especially the soldier, designates by this denomination all who are not Christians, and thus the distinction is, as a matter of course, frequently unclear. The districts which almost exclusively belong to them are the lowlands of the Kura and Arax; but intermixed with Grusinians, they occupy besides the eastern portion of the government of Tiflis, and together with Armenians, they are found in the government of Eriwan and in the Karabagh (the southern portion of the government of Jelissawetpol). They have also nomad tribes in the steppes from the Caspian Sea to Wladikawkas, and numerous colonies on the east coast of Daghestan; a branch tribe, too, dwells in the valley of the Elburz. Their total numbers, including the nomad tribes, exceeds 1,100,000 souls. Their language is akin to Turkish, and belongs to the so-called East Turkish dialect. It sounds far harsher than the elegant Osmanli, and is pretty generally understood throughout the whole Caucasus. Their costume is Persian with some slight modification; except in the neighbourhood of Achaltzich, close to the Turkish frontier, where the Turkish dress is worn. The lower classes of the population chiefly possess the qualities of the Turkish race, perseverance, temperance, and trustworthiness. But a long period of Persian rule must have produced a pernicious influence upon the higher strata; yet there still exists a sterling element amongst them.

The Armenians, numbering about 600,000 souls, unlike the above-mentioned tribes, have no especial dwelling-place in the country; they are everywhere to be found. With them the line of separation between the peasant and the remaining

population is still more sharply defined than with the Tartars. The peasants, who in the governments of Erivan and Jelissawetpol live intermixed with Tartars, can, in outward appearance, scarcely be distinguished from the latter, and as regards moral qualities differ but little from them. The Armenian of the town is, however, of quite another stamp. He is the merchant *par excellence*. There is scarcely a single village in the country where one or more Armenians are not playing the part of Jews, like those which infest East Germany and Poland. Sly, pliant, persevering, seldom if ever conscientious, they monopolise all transactions in business, and speedily become the bankers and tyrants of the place. Still it must not be concluded from this that there are no honourable exceptions amongst those whose intelligence and energy have conferred signal benefits upon the country. The Armenian language is rich in literature, and the alphabet possesses, in common with the Grusinian, two characters—the old ecclesiastical, and the current character at present in use. The actual language has been more and more diverging from the ecclesiastical, and is universally admitted to belong to the Indo-Germanic family. It sounds very harsh, and is apparently difficult to acquire; but this is immaterial to the traveller, for every Armenian, even the peasant, understands Turkish, and not unfrequently Russian. There is one very remarkable circumstance in connection with the Armenians. Although this people has been in continual subjection to successive conquerors, although a number has been scattered over the four quarters of the globe, although the greater portion still live under Turkish rule, never yet has an Armenian been known to deny the Christian faith handed down to him by his forefathers from the first centuries of our era.

The inhabitants of the mountains manifest so varied a conglomeration of different races, different languages, and different customs, that the traveller at first despairs of ever finding his way amongst the confusion. Such clearly defined distinctions of every kind render it impossible to classify systematically all these nationalities, and I must confine myself

to the attempt of briefly portraying the most prominent amongst them. A survey is much simplified by separating them into three groups—west, central, and east. It may be well to notice that the Russians, in all their accounts of battles fought in the Caucasus, employ the definitions right and left wing from the St. Petersburg standpoint. Thus when the right wing is mentioned, allusion is made to the western tribes; and when the left wing is named, the Tschetschnia and Daghestan are referred to. The total number of the mountain population in 1865, or previous to the emigration of the Tscherkesse tribes, which deprived the country of important sinews, amounted to about 900,000 souls.

1. The western group of the mountain population comprises the tribes which dwell on the south side of the Caucasus as far as the Elburz, and on the north side further eastward up to the territory of Wladikawkas. We find in the first place the *Adigè*, called by the Russians Tscherkesse; but this name is a collective term for a great number of small and still smaller, tribes, as for instance the Dshigetes, Ubyches, Schapsuchs, Natuchaitzs, and others, not bound together by any common tie, possessing different languages and customs, and in continual hostility one with another. They formerly inhabited the mountain range from Taman as far up as Pitzunda, and the Northern Foreland to the furthest extremity of the Kouban. To effect their conquest a long series of wars undertaken against individual tribes was necessary for no union against the common foe ever existed amongst the tribes themselves. They were finally subdued in the year 1864; but from that time a mass emigration to Turkey which no power could restrain, commenced, and 400,000 Tscherkesse abandoned their fatherland, which now lies almost entirely desolate. Their customs have been portrayed in very different colours. Some persons have held them forth as heroes of freedom, whilst others have laid great stress on their marked predilection for their neighbours' goods. What appears certain is, that with great rapacity they combine the qualities of mediæval chivalry and fidelity. Another tribe, in many

respects similar to the Tscherkesse, but otherwise indolent and untrustworthy, are the Abkhasians, who occupy the abovementioned district of Tsebelda, as well as the coast-line from Pitzunda to the Ingur, the eastern half of which is called Zamurzachan. They took no part in the emigration, and are supposed to be Christians. Still with a mountain population the existence of churches and priests is not always a proof of sincere attachment to Christianity on the part of the people. On the north side of the mountain chain, on the Upper Kouban, and on the Kuma, dwell the Kabardans. Their country is called Kabarda, and the portion of it stretching further eastward to the Terek, and as far as Wladikawkas, is called Little Kabarda. This tribe, which in the early middle ages was Christian, though later on converted to Islamism, is still regarded as the most chivalrous. Their customs have been law to a great portion of the Caucasus, and their costume has been adopted throughout nearly the entire country, even by the Cossacks, their neighbours on the Kouban and Terek. The Kabardans have in general lived in good fellowship with the Russians, and a bold attempt of Schamyl to induce Kabarda to join in a crusade against infidels failed. Besides the tribes already mentioned, there are Tartars dwelling in the northern declivity of the principal chain between Elburz and Adai-Choch. But the above-named Swanethians, and the mountain population of Mingrelia (Lekschgum) and Imeretia (Radscha) must be counted amongst the Kartalinians, and not amongst the real mountain tribes.

2. The central group is composed of only one nationality, the Ossites. Although not very numerous, they have for a long time formed the subject of study, being the only mountain tribe whose Aryan origin is beyond doubt. The language belongs to the Medo-Persian branch, and their costumes, strangely enough, recall to mind the old German. They brew too a very palatable beer, called 'ludi.' Their territory extends itself in the principal chain from the Adai-Choch to within a short distance beyond the Kasbek Pass. As regards religion, they are partly Mahommedans and partly Christians.

There appears besides to be heathens amongst them. Like the Kabardans they have lived in harmony with the Russians, a circumstance of still greater importance to the latter during their wars with Schamyl, as the Grusinian Military Road, the only means of communication between Baku and Taman, passes through the country of the Ossites.

3. The eastern group of the mountain tribes is at the same time the most numerous and interesting. Their country from 1839 to 1859 became the theatre of an exasperated religious war; here Schamyl domineered as priest, hero, and tyrant. Two types of nationality may be easily distinguished —the Tschetschentzes and the Daghestans. The former occupy the Tschetschnia, the declivity of the mountain chain to the Terek, and still further beyond. They are divided into a great number of individual tribes, possessing separate customs and languages. A subdivision of this group, which occupies 'Little Tschetschnia,' between Wladikawkas and the Argun, and to which the tribes of the Kists, Galgaiers, and others belong, appear to differ slightly from the rest. The character generally given to the Tschetschentzes is not very favourable. They are regarded as a thievish, untrustworthy, and mischievous race, and their conflicts with the Russians consisted in mere bush-fighting behind ambuscades. As in the case of the above-mentioned Tscherkesse, no common bond of union connects together the Tschetschentz tribes; and although Schamyl succeeded by cruelty and bloodthirsty violence in keeping some of the tribes chained down to his standard, others nevertheless sided with Russia, or at all events remained tranquil. The inhabitants of Daghestan stand undoubtedly highest in intelligence amongst the mountain tribes. In spite of the rugged and chiefly inhospitable mountains, they possess to some degree an industry, and almost a model system of agriculture, and one of the tribes possesses even a literature. As regards industry, the manufacture of steel and arms deserves favourable mention. Notwithstanding the deficiency of all important manufacturing appliances, they have themselves contrived to cast some of the cannons

used in their wars with the Russians. The blades forged at some of the places enjoy a great reputation throughout the Caucasus. Amongst the number of tribes into which they are divided, and which, as in the case of the Tschetschentzes and Tscherkesse, possess different languages and customs, the Avares, who dwell in Northern Daghestan between Bottlich and Temirchanschura, occupy the most prominent position. They have a written language, using the Arab characters. From amongst them have always sprung leaders of great movements; and Himri, the birthplace of Schamyl, also lies in the district of Avaria. The tribes which inhabit Southern Daghestan and the mountain declivities towards the valleys of the Alazan and the Kura are comprised under the collective denomination of Lesghis. They are looked upon as trustworthy, industrious workmen. It is a very extraordinary circumstance that the great number of small tribes in Daghestan, which are crowded together in a few villages, and even in a few huts, should still speak their own language, understood by none of their neighbours. This shows how here every migration of a tribe from the earliest ages of mankind has left traces behind it which have, frequently by the force of circumstances, been nearly obliterated, but never entirely extinguished. The Udi, one of the Duodez tribes, dwelling in the few villages to the east of Nuchà, have long puzzled ethnographs and philologists. An English *savant*, who has long made this tribe the subject of special study, has recently maintained that it descends from the ancient Egyptians. The tie which formerly united all Daghestan under one standard is Islamism. But few Musulmen exist so attached to their creed as the mountain tribes, and this devotion alone enabled a clever fanatic like Schamyl to render such varied elements subservient to his ascetic thirst for power. This sincere attachment to religion produces in the mind of the traveller a pleasing contrast to the lukewarm scepticism of the notables and the frequent artificial fanaticism of the masses in Persia and Turkey. Thus the tribes of Daghestan are famous for bravery and fidelity, and unlike the thievish

Tschetschentzes for honesty. Their hospitality does not require especial notice, as, the high road excepted, it is everywhere to be met with in the Caucasus.

Of the remaining mountain tribes we have still to notice the Pschaws, Tusches, and Chewsurs, of which mention has already been made in connection with the Kartalinian tribes. Little Caucasus does not possess mountain tribes properly so-called. Several thousand nomad Kurds, however, of which eighty families belong to the sect of the Zezides, wander upon the slopes of the Alagüz and the Ararat. The country of Lenkoran is inhabited by Persians, who speak Talyschi, a dialect differing widely from High Persian, and who are probably descended from the ancient Medes. In conclusion, there remains the tribe of the Nogais, occupying the steppes north of the Caucasus, who are either Tartarised Mongolians, or Tartars with a strong infusion of Mongolian blood. The Kalmucks, who dwell in the government of Astrachan, bordering on the frontiers of the Caucasus, are of pure Mongolian origin.

We now come to the Russians, the ruling population. As it is not the object of this work to describe this element in general, my observations will be confined to a few comments upon their relations with the Caucasus. The Russian population, which here amounts to nearly one million souls, may for convenience sake, be divided into three categories; officers, officials, workmen and merchants; peasants, and finally Cossacks. The first class abounds everywhere; of course in smaller numbers in the country and mountainous districts than in the towns. Officers, officials, and especially common soldiers, regard service in the Caucasus as a transitory stage in their career. The workman returns to Russia, as soon as he has earned a sufficient amount of money; and the merchant, who has to compete with the Armenians, finds it, in consequence, no easy task to gain a livelihood. The Russian peasant is not often to be met with in the country. He does not seem born for colonisation; and there are only two tribes which appear to be in a prosperous condition. These are the two sects of the Malakans and Duchobortzs, banished from Russia

on account of their dangerous political tendencies. Their dwelling-places and customs will be hereafter described. The Cossacks were, moreover, the first Russian pioneers in the Caucasus. Previous to the time of Peter the Great, discontented hordes had already deserted their fatherland, and settled down on the northern boundary of the mountain chain. Soon, more especially through their women, they intermixed with the neighbouring mountain tribes, adopted many of their customs, and even wore the Tscherkesse dress. They are now divided into two bans; that of the Kouban, and that of the Terek, which have absorbed the smaller independent bans, previously existing, such as the Grebentzkoi Cossacks between Sunsha and Terek, and the Tschornomorisch Cossacks of the Black Sea. Each ban is divided into regiments, and again into sotnies, or squadrons, being originally detachments of one hundred men each, this precise number, however, not always being maintained. Each detachment occupies the district assigned to it. Details respecting regulations of service and domestic relations will be given later on. These bans, moreover, are on the eve of reconstruction, a process which, in the case of the Cossacks of the Don, is being carried out in accordance with modern ideas.

The foreigners compose the last element of the population in the Caucasus. Though not numerous, they have exercised considerable influence in the country. The Germans possess colonies in the governments of Tiflis and Jelissawetpol, which from their prosperous condition enjoy much renown throughout the entire land. Germans, occupying almost every social station, are found in nearly every town and district. The large copper mines of Kedabeg, situated near Lake Goktschka in the government of Jelissawetpol, belong to Messrs. Siemens and Halski; and the model dairy farms which have been erected to the south-west of Tiflis, in the centre of a Tartar population, are the property of Herr von Kutzschenbach; and at Alexandropol, on the Turkish frontier, Germans are again met with in the modest capacity of innkeepers, or at Baku, in that of tailors. French have settled in large towns

in the character of landlords of hotels, hairdressers, and milliners. In conjunction with Italians, they are also connected with the silk trade in the districts of Nuchà and Schumachà. Englishmen are chiefly represented by railway engineers, and also by that class of engineers who construct and look after machinery. Turkey, and above all, Persia, naturally contribute a large contingent of temporary residents. But amongst the entire foreign element, none is so remarkable as the Geber priest, who resides in the fire temple at Bakù, and who is sent by the Parsee community of India to watch over the sacred flame, and see that it is never extinguished; for native fire-worshippers have long ceased to exist there.

CHAPTER II.

POTI TO BORSHOM.

Poti—By rail to Kutais—Virgin Forest in Mingrelia—Kutais—Hôtel de France—Our Servant Ali—An Imeretinian Tailor—Caucasian Dress—Monastery of Gelati—Motzamethi—Excursion to Swanethia—Unfortunate Start—Valley of the Rion—Gorge of Ladshanura—Lailaschi—Grusinian Society—Peculiar Customs respecting Toasts—Orbeli and Muri—Valley of the Tzchenis-Tzchali—Lentechi—Characteristics of Swanethia—Ludshi—Pass of Latpari—Encounter with Swanethians—View from Pass of Latpari—Return—Lailaschi—Twischi—Departure from Kutais—Kwirila—Pass of Suram—Bjelogorie Carts and Buffaloes—Suram—Borshom—Timothisubani and Daba—Ruins of a Monastery—Shooting Excursion—Sport in the Caucasus—Attack of Fever.

No great length of time has elapsed since Poti consisted of a mere swamp with a few huts built on piles; ten years ago the inhabitants punted merrily in rainy weather from one house to the other, and although at present the streets are filled in and provided with a kind of pavement, still frogs are heard to croak exultingly from between the layers of piles and the ground floor; nor can those animals be found fault with, for there scarcely exists on earth such another paradise for amphibious creatures. Poti owes its actual

prosperity, if not indeed its very existence, to a slip of the pen; for when Turkey ceded to Russia, by the Treaty of Adrianople, the territory between Kars and the sea, the boundary line was, by general consent, drawn to run down the river *Tschoroch*, which arrangement would have brought over to the Russian side the advantageous harbour of Batum. It was, however, discovered, but not until after the ratifications of the treaty of peace, that the river *Tscholoch*, which runs about eighteen miles on this side of Batum, had been inserted in the treaty as the boundary line. Batum was lost, and Poti was accepted in its stead. It is, strictly speaking, not correct to state that the harbour of Poti is unfavourable for shipping purposes, for no harbour exists; merely a roadstead, completely exposed, and very shallow, vessels of any size being obliged to anchor at a considerable distance from the shore. The channel up to the Rion, which river is only navigable for very flat-bottomed boats, is closed by a bar; the depth of water is often only from four to five feet, and the channel is frequently rendered dangerous by heavy breakers. The maritime position of Poti is therefore, by no means brilliant, and the great distance of Soukhum Kaleh, which possesses a tolerably good roadstead, has chiefly prevented it till now from becoming the entrance to the Caucasus. It must also be noted that up to the year 1864 Soukhum Kaleh was the centre of unruly tribes, whilst Poti, with its Gurian-Mingrelian population gave no cause for disquietude. Another

circumstance, too, must by no means be overlooked; namely, that the river at Poti afforded a practicable route through the region of swampy forests in Mingrelia, which would, otherwise, have been impassable. The project of building a harbour at Poti is still somewhat remote, and if the intention of doing so ever really existed, its execution has been impeded by the fear of the great expense, which *must* necessarily be incurred in the construction of dams and dredging operations. Curiously enough, a commencement has been effected, but at the wrong end; for out into the sea, at considerable cost, an iron pier has been erected, against which no ship can lie, and from which the waves have already compassionately washed away a portion.

The worst of Poti is the climate. No European has passed a night there and been spared by the fever; nor were we more fortunate than others; and on the very first evening of our arrival we fancied ourselves inhaling the germs of the disease from the dense misty atmosphere, smelling like the air of a bath-room where the windows have been closed for a week. The reader will find in the last chapter of this work further information respecting the nature of the fever in the Caucasus, and the remedies which are employed, with or without success, against it. It may fairly be concluded that other inconveniences, such as mosquitoes and house vermin, were not wanting in the place, and during the night the traveller may, according to his taste, devote

his attention to the insects in his bed, to the rats in his room, or to the frogs beneath his window.

It would be very ungrateful on my part, if I rendered to Poti no acknowledgment of the pleasant evening—the first in the Caucasus—which I passed there. I had already fallen in, on landing from the steamer, with a Prince Gagarin, a Petersburgh acquaintance, officially employed at Kutais, though accidentally away at Poti. In the company of the Prince, and of other gentlemen of widely different nationalities, whose acquaintance we had made partly on the steamer and partly on our arrival at Poti, and the greater number of whom had known the Caucasus for years, we passed a very jovial evening, during the course of which myself and my companions gathered much valuable information respecting our projected tour. We certainly had to undergo one disillusion, for we expected from Bodenstedt's and Mirza Schaffy's representations to find only Kachetia wine on the table, and were greatly surprised to see Vin de Bordeaux exclusively produced—a wine which taken in the right quantity appears to be one of the best preventive remedies against fever. We afterwards took a walk in the botanical gardens—a small park very nicely laid out—where all kinds of southern plants, known to us only in hot-houses, thrive with exuberant fragrance. I only missed the palm-tree, and learned to my surprise, that in spite of the hot climate in the summer, and of the mild climate in the winter, it does not grow

here. During my walk I made my first acquaintance with the Grusinian language; I speedily relinquished all further study of this dialect, when my tongue had undergone the ordeal of such words as rchwâ, tzchrâ (eight, nine), and ,otzchmodaatti (eighty). The night passed in the hotel was fearful—warm feather-beds, a sultry mist, no possibility of opening the window for fear of fever, and legions of insects welcoming our arrival in the country.

The next morning my travelling companions could not refrain from indulging in an early bathe before leaving the Black Sea. I forebore from following their example in consequence of warnings which I had received the previous evening, and possibly owing to this circumstance the fever may have dealt more mildly with me than with my companions.

At 8.30 A.M. a special train was to convey some railway officials to Tiflis, and we obtained permission to join them as far as Kutais; we consequently took care to arrive in good time at the banks of the Rion in order to be conveyed over to the railway station, which is situated on the north side of the town, and rather above it; but at the appointed hour not the slightest preparation for departure was made on board the steamer, which plied between the two landing-places. Gradually a considerable number of passengers assembled together on the steamer, all equally determined, *per fas aut nefas*, to avail themselves of this convenient opportunity of getting to Tiflis; for only a third

of the line, as far as the station at Kwirila, was open to regular traffic. The railway officials, however, displayed an example of humanity, and finally our special train attained the length of about six carriages, a length for the Caucasus railway quite unheard of before that date.

The railway station at Poti is very primitive. It consists of two sheds, the one open and the other shut; and both so new that they might fairly be said to exult in their cleanliness. But, to make amends, it possesses a restaurant which, at all events, in choice of refreshments can surpass most German ones.

At last, it being past ten o'clock, the train felt compelled to make a start, and to our utter amazement, steamed off at the rate of twenty-eight miles an hour, a speed quite unknown on Russian railways. An English engineer, the traffic-manager of this portion of the line, informed us, for our consolation, that on pretty nearly every occasion on which he accompanied the directors, an accident of some kind almost invariably ensued: he suggested, however, that in our particular instance, as they were going on beyond the section under his control, the probabilities were that the train would run off the line somewhere amongst the Suram mountains, a district, he assured us, in the highest degree favourable for such occurrences. Amongst other experiences which he was kind enough to relate to us, the following communication was certainly interesting; namely, that a bullock, driven

over, seldom occasioned serious damage, but the engine, on coming into collision with the hard and stiff bones of a buffalo would, as a rule, come off the rails, or otherwise sustain injury. For the first twenty-five miles the railway traversed the virgin forest of Mingrelia; on both sides of the line huge masses of trees rose up into the air, but it was frequently difficult to recognise the kind to which they belonged, so thickly were their trunks and branches intermingled with the wild vine and ivy. The underwood is a mixture of box-tree and laurel, and perfectly impassable. The after-growth is so luxuriant that even on the strips of land which had been dug up along the line of rails, whilst the sleepers were being laid down, vegetation had sprung up afresh, and within the space of three years had attained a height of more than six feet. The soil is damp and muddy; the throwing up of the embankment for the railway not only necessitated great labour, but the lives of numerous workmen, scarcely one of the soldiers employed on the construction of the line having escaped marsh fever. In some places the laying down of the railway has produced most melancholy results. Arising probably from the deficiency of proper drainage under the embankment, and the consequent stagnancy of the water in the soil, large patches of forest have completely died away, the rotten trees extending their leafless branches over hideous pools of muddy water—a nauseous spectacle when contrasted with the rich abundant foliage to be

seen growing close around in every direction. Nor can I say that the virgin forest, respecting which I had conjured up such romantic notions, produced a satisfactory impression upon my mind; on the contrary I found this luxuriant vegetation, which the eye cannot pierce five paces, and which impregnates the atmosphere with poisonous vapours, harassing and oppressive. Only one station, Tschelodidi, is situated in the forest—constructed there without, apparently, any necessity whatsoever—for not a living soul inhabits the place, and the receipts for the first year scarcely seem to have amounted to five roubles.

About twenty-five miles from Poti the railway entered a flat, well-cultivated district, dotted over here and there with small Mingrelian villages—the whole forming an agreeable landscape. The soil is heavy and fertile, and is generally sown over with maize. It yields abundant harvests, notwithstanding the indolence of the inhabitants, who remain true to their antediluvian implements of agriculture, and who devote no portion of their leisure to rooting up weeds, which flourish in all directions. The houses possess a character peculiar to dwellings in the country west of the Suram Chain, and which is nowhere else to be met with in the Caucasus: that is to say, a wooden building with moderately steep gable-roof, and a verandah, which generally encircles the entire building, and which, protruding a few feet on the front side, is supported by rude wooden pillars. Thus houses, even in the

mountainous parts of Mingrelia and Imeretia, are constructed to stand free and without being made to incline against a slope, whereas in Grusia the back portion of the dwellings are generally built to lean against the side of the mountains. This probably arises from the abundant supply of wood, which to the westward of the Suram Chain, is ready at hand for building purposes, whilst to the eastward, timber being less plentiful, some economy is required in the consumption of it. Right and left of the railway, projecting mountains, green with verdure, rise to unimportant heights; but nothing is visible of the actual mountain chain. The station Senaki lies close to the chief town of the district which bears the same name. Here the line crosses the high road leading from Orpiri on the Rion, to Zugdidi, the capital of Mingrelia, and residence of the Dadian, a princely family deposed; shortly afterwards, on the far side, it passes over an immense iron bridge, every portion of which, down to the final nail, has been brought from England, and which spans the Tzchenis-Tzchali, separating Mingrelia from Imeretia, a rapid stream, very full in the rainy season. Beyond, in the distance, a view of the mountain chain for the first time unfolds itself to the gaze, and, through a gap in the projecting mountains, a glimpse is caught of that splendid snowy pyramid, the Tetnuld, with the long pointed crest of the Schchara (Nuamquam) and far away into the Colchis plain. At Samtredi, the next station, the line

traverses the great Imeretinian military road, and passing through a pleasant, undulated district, reaches the Kutais station, after crossing, immediately before, a long iron bridge to the left bank of the Rion. Kutais station is eight versts from the town; two droschkies, ordered beforehand by telegraph, met us at the station, and in these we continued our journey in company with a Russian, who spoke German, and who was starting on a short pleasure trip in the Caucasus with his three sons, the latter between ten and thirteen years of age. Considering the extreme youth of his offspring, the journey was decidedly premature! After an hour's drive over a good road, and chiefly through a forest of young oaks, we reached the Hôtel de France at Kutais, our head-quarters for the next few days.

The town of Kutais, the capital of the government of the same name and the ancient residence of the Imeretinian kings, lies on the rapid Rion at the spot where that river leaves the mountain chain to flow through a slightly undulated district of the Colchis plain. The importance of the situation has undoubtedly diminished since the Imeretinian military road, which touches Kutais, has had to give up in favour of the railway the greater portion of its former traffic. Still two other routes, of importance to the town, are projected; a branch railway from the station above the town, to the coal mines of Tkwibuli —the only ones existing in the Caucasus—situated in

the Nakerala mountains, some miles to the north-east, and a road, which is to ascend the valley of the Rion, to cross over the Mamisson pass to the valley of the Ardon, and to continue to Vladikawkas. Kutais is agreeably situated; the adjacent mountains are rich in verdure, which imparts a joyous character to the scene. The climate is not so unhealthy as that of the low-lands, as the elevation of 600 feet, and the circumstance of the country situated on the mountain declivities being better drained, serve to impede the development of malaria to the extent prevalent in the marshy district of Mingrelia. The winter is mild, and the summer hot during the day-time, but there are cool refreshing sea-breezes in the evening. The interior of the town, the population of which numbers about 12,000 souls, and the greater portion of which stands on the left bank of the river, contains scarcely anything worth seeing. In the suburbs are small lanes with, here and there, a few low-built houses on each side; near to the Rion is a small garden and villa, in which the Emperor was received in 1871. In the centre are a few large official buildings, such as may be found in Russian provincial towns, an insignificant bazaar, and a public garden extending over several acres of ground and containing some fine old trees. Here lay our 'Hôtel de France,' a second edition of the 'Hôtel de Yalta.' A European can form no conception of the dirt which this house contains. The furniture of our room—the best of all—consisted of two tottering bedsteads, one primæval divan, and two or

three melancholy examples of chairs, to which was added—for the accommodation of three persons—one basin to wash in, and one glass. Many times during the course of the morning toilet, we had occasion to entreat the waiter to replenish our single water-jug, unless we preferred to fetch fresh water ourselves from the well, for that menial, who was a Mingrelian nobleman, was frequently not at hand when required, and under no circumstances particularly attentive. For a similar reason we took the liberty to pour the water, when done with, into the street below, and this we accomplished without exciting public indignation. Our host, a Frenchman, Monsieur Hector, charged us the modest price of seven roubles a day for our room, and excused himself with the standard remark, as applicable to third parties, who shall be nameless: 'Il fallait bien se faire payer une partie des cinq milliards.' The most endurable part of the whole affair was the food, upon which Monsieur Hector, mindful of his former career, expended more care and attention. Besides the 'Hôtel de France' there is another hotel in Kutais, called, I believe, 'Hôtel de la Colchide,' or 'Hôtel de la Médée,' but I had no opportunity of ascertaining by personal experience the extent of its good or bad qualities.

Through Prince Gagarin we became acquainted with some of the Russian officials, and passed several agreeable days in their society. We, in general, devoted the morning to sight-seeing in the town, our

attention being especially attracted by the novelty of its oriental character, although Kutais is far less imbued with this feature than many other places. Our afternoons we spent in the Ferme, a splendid park, lying above, and at a few minutes distance from, the right bank of the Rion, and below the ancient regal château. It was here, at a thoroughly oriental dinner, to which we were invited, that we made an acquaintance of such importance to our future journey that the circumstance forms an epoch in our entire route. We had already noticed at the hotel an object called Ali, who appeared to be a kind of commissionnaire; here, in the park, in a dilapidated building, in company with several wild-looking Persians and Tartars, and busy amongst pots and pans and cooking utensils, we came upon this same individual again. The dinner which he served us up *al fresco* (it is true we had a wooden table and chairs) was, if looked at with the eye of an European, the most incongrous mixture of every different thing imaginable. First of all we had placed before us grapes, then boiled chicken with rice, after which a dish (highly to be recommended) of baked apples stuffed with brawn highly spiced, and—to finish up with—the characteristic *plat* of the east—mutton and rice. The use of garlick, dear to every Musulman, was to Ali on this occasion 'forbidden fruit.' In respect to drink we ourselves did not depart materially from prescribed ordinances, for, abjuring wine, we took only ale, placed, or rather hung down, to cool in a deep

well in the park, each bottle being attached to a long string, and then allowed to descend until it touched the surface of the water. At dessert, which consisted of magnificent grapes, we inquired of Ali if he was disposed to accompany us on our travels. He agreed to our proposal on very moderate terms, and, as subsequent events proved, turned out to be a most valuable acquisition.

Ali's cradle (I speak metaphorically, for no such appliance is known in the east) rocked at Lenkoran, on the shores of the Caspian Sea; in early youth he migrated with his parents to Schemacha, and changing about in the Caucasus and Persia from one place of residence to another, he became successively servant, groom, and bathing-house attendant. At the time we are speaking of he was part proprietor of a bathing-establishment at Kutais. His cardinal virtues were those of the commonest Turk, honesty and sobriety; but his courage speedily gave way on the most trifling provocation, and he lived in abject terror of robbers, fancying that every tree contained one lying concealed in ambush. He could never be brought to comprehend why we were not always mounted on horseback, with loaded guns by our sides, and ready for every emergency. His extensive knowledge of languages was of great advantage to us. Exclusive of Talysch, his mother tongue, and the Tartar dialect, his second mother tongue, he understood and spoke with considerable fluency, the Russian, Turkish (Osmanli),

Persian and Grusinian languages, with all the different-provincial *patois*. He had no acquaintance with the written language, and, when he spoke, as far as I could judge from his performance in Russian, he displayed a proud indifference to declensions and conjugations. In fact, with the exception of his undoubted honesty, he answered precisely to the description so accurately portrayed of the Persian servant by Dr. Polack, in his work on Persia. Indefatigable on the road, *grand seigneur* in the towns, good-natured, negligent, dainty-mouthed, and vain—especially in his attempts (at our expense) to adorn, by a constant change of head-dress, features to which the Graces had not stood godmother. When we parted company, without counting half-a-dozen fantastically shaped fur caps, he was the proud possessor of several Turkish fez, numberless Arab kefije, not to mention an unlimited supply of head-kerchiefs of every kind and hue. The terms stipulated for by Ali had the great advantage of being cheap for us and very favourable for him; he received, exclusively of keep, to which he contrived surreptitiously to add each week a new article of clothing, twenty roubles a month, a perfectly unheard-of sum according to local computation.

Just in the same way that no German thinks of leaving Constantinople without first investing in a fez, or Egypt without purchasing a turban, which he wears round his neck, so were we equally unable to resist the temptation of arraying ourselves in Tscher-

kesse costume. We ordered a tailor through Ali, who the following day made his appearance, a dagger in his girdle, and a yard measure in his hand. As he only spoke the Imeretinian dialect, our orders led to some difficulty of explanation; however, thanks to Ali's abilities as interpreter, we contrived to make our wishes intelligible, and the tailor noted down in his book our respective measures. I noticed that his handwriting was the most elegant I had ever seen in the Grusinian Mchedruli character, the cramped and complicated letters being converted under his hand into the most charming arabesques. The Tscherkesse costume, which he duly delivered to us a few days later, is frightfully elaborate, and I can only say that I find it neither practical nor comfortable. I know that my opinion is widely at variance with that of most Russian officers, who take a great fancy to this dress in the Caucasus, and wear it frequently. My notions are merely those of one who likes to be able to dress quickly, and, when dressed, to be able to move about freely—both utter impossibilities in this costume. The origin of the so-called Caucasian or Tscherkesse dress must be sought for in the Kabarda, a country which sets the fashion for the Caucasus in the same way that Paris and London do for Europe. With some insignificant modifications it is worn by the entire mountain population, as well as by the tribes of Kartalinian origin, with the exception of the Gurians. It is seldom, if ever, met with amongst Tartars and

Armenians; the Cossacks have adopted the costume from the Russians, and even officers of other troops wear it occasionally.

The most important portions of this dress are the tscherkesska and the bèschmet (or archalyk), two lengthy garments, worn one above the other. The beschmet is a coat with sleeves hanging down half over the thigh; fastened in front up to the neck by a row of hooks and eyes, with a low straight collar and capacious pockets on either side, embroidered the whole way down. The beschmet is composed of striped or printed cotton, and, in the case of wealthy persons, the portions around the neck and on the sleeves, which show, are made of silk. The tscherkesska is worn over the beschmet, the former being broader and longer, with sleeves hanging down so far that they require to be turned up; in front it is fastened across the chest by a row of microscopically small buttons woven from thread, and joined together by means of eyes, a labour entailing much time and trouble; it hangs loose round the neck, showing the beschmet worn underneath. On both sides of the breast are sewn on some seven, eight, or ten rows of cartridge-pouches, frequently adorned with silver and gold, and, amongst the notables, often containing boxes of ivory or horn with silver lids, holding ammunition. These cartridge-pouches are a most practical invention, and I have had similar ones made to suit my own German shooting jacket, and have found them most useful. The tscherkesska has no pockets, but is provided with slits, through which the

hand passes into the pockets of the beschmet. The tscherkesska is generally made of stout woollen material, mostly of one colour; at the time of my visit white ones were in fashion. A rough, greenish material, made by the Lesghies, considered to be waterproof and almost imperishable, was also very highly thought of. Modifications of this cut are generally to be met with in Grusia, where the traveller will frequently notice a costume, which is a mixture of the Tscherkesse and the old national dress. In that country vestments are worn shorter, not reaching down farther than above the knee, whilst the sleeves of the upper garment are slit open from the elbow, and can thus, with a view to giving greater freedom to the hands, be turned up over the shoulders, or fastened together behind the back. Examples of this costume frequently occur amongst Armenians residing in towns when they do not prefer to wear European clothes. The Tusch and Pschaws carry in place of the sewn-on cartridge-pouches, a brass case, suspended from the neck and left shoulder, capable of holding seven or eight cartridges. In cold and rainy weather the garment generally worn is the burka, a half-circular piece of thick felt, with the shaggy woollen side exposed. This hangs from the neck by a strap, and as it only shelters one side of the body at a time, it requires to be constantly shifted in the direction facing the wind and rain. Thus, when observed from the weather side, the wearer looks like a gigantic mushroom.

The clothing for the legs consists of tight, evenly fitting trousers of dark material; over these are leather or cloth gaiters, often richly worked with lace and embroidery. The shoe is a simple half-shoe not attached to the gaiter, but slightly protruding over it; and I have seen instead of a shoe a sandal worn, made of leather tightly bound round. The Cossacks wear tolerably high boots of Russian leather, and not such narrow trousers.

The portion of the costume which is of the most varied description is undoubtedly the covering worn around the head. This characteristic pervades the entire East, and even in instances where a tribe adopts almost entirely the costume of another tribe, it always displays a marked partiality for its own especial and peculiar head-dress. Thus, on the Egyptian *reliefs*, as well as upon the ancient Persian engravings drawn upon stone, and in the temple at Persepolis, it is always the head-gear which characterises the individual tribes. The predominant head-dress in the Caucasus, is the fur cap, commonly called the papach, but made in a thousand different shapes and forms. The mountain tribes generally wear a round one with a cloth top to it, the size changing with the fashion; seldom less than twenty centimètres in height, and made of such long-haired fur that the diameter is little less than the height itself. The material consists exclusively of sheep-skin, rough and fine, black, brown, and white. The Grusinians wear rather a pointed cap, slightly turned

up at the top, without intermixture of cloth, and not of any very unusual dimensions; and, whilst the mountain tribes prefer the long-haired, shaggy fur, the former like the fine, curly Astrachan, or, as it is called in the East, Bokhara skin. Tartars and Armenians wear caps of every imaginable shape, sometimes set off with cloth or silk, and embroidered with gold, sometimes simple, pointed, and without ornament, like those in use amongst the Persian peasants. The Jews in Mingrelia and Imeretia have also adopted the latter shape, but their caps are really of quite alarming dimensions, and recall to mind, involuntarily, the representations given in old German paintings of the Old Testament. I have said a few words in the last chapter about the necessity of a thick covering to the head, and, consequently, will confine myself to the remark that, during my comparatively short stay in the country, I fully appreciated the advantages derived from wearing a fur cap. The second characteristic feature of the dress is the baschlyk; the expression is Turkish, and simply means a covering for the head. It is, however, so well known in Europe that a special description may be dispensed with here. The material of which the baschlyk is composed in the Caucasus, is chiefly a yellowish grey texture of camel's hair or goat's hair; in wet weather it is worn over the fur cap, and has been introduced for that purpose throughout the whole Russian army; nevertheless in Imeretia, Mingrelia, and Abkhasia, the common people wear it simply wound round the head like a turban, and without any other

covering to the head. The great antiquity of this article of apparel is attested by the celebrated mosaic in the museum at Naples, representing a battle fought by Alexander, where the Persian warrior, who offers his horse to the king, is wearing a baschlyk. There still remain to be mentioned the black low felt cap with turned-up brim, worn by the Tusch, Pschaws, and occasionally by the poorer inhabitants of Grusia; amongst the Mussulman population, the turban of the Mullah; in Swanethia, the grey felt hat, somewhat resembling the Tyrolese hat; and—the most remarkable of all—the head-dress worn by the Grusinians, Mingrelians, and Imeretinians. It is made of black material, shaped like a round plate, and, in the case of the notables, embroidered with gold. It varies in size from that of a German student's 'cerevis' to that of a Prussian thaler, and is made fast to the crown of the head by a string, affording naturally no protection against sun or rain. These caps are still very common in Guria, but in other parts of the country they have been replaced by the papach and the baschlyk. The Gurian costume has still to be noticed. It is entirely different from the Tscherkesse, and is a compound of the Genoese dress, as worn in Italy during the middle ages, and the Turkish costume of the present time. The dress of the Chewsurs, which is the most remarkable of all in the Caucasus, will be described further on.

In describing costumes the subject of arms must not be forgotten; for in the East weapons form an

inseparable adjunct to dress. Those which appear to be characteristic of the Tscherkesse attire are the kindshal and the schaschka. The kindshal is a straight two-edged knife, measuring from thirty to forty centimètres, with one or more grooves which do not, however, as a rule, run down the middle of the blades; the handle which, strange to say, is very slightly hollowed out for the hand, has no guard, and the scabbard is plain and covered with leather. The kindshal is worn in front of the body and not by the side of it at the girdle, and is attached to a small black leather strap, which like all straps in the Caucasus, has always the seam in the middle, and which also serves to keep the tscherkesska together. Besides the kindshal, are suspended from this strap a grease-box, and a complicated instrument made up of a steel for striking fire, a screw-driver, a gimlet, and a hook; also several other articles of a like description. The schaschka, a longer and tolerably crooked sabre, equally without guard, is attached to a shoulder-belt, made from a narrow strap specially used for this purpose, and rests on the left hip with the concave side of the blade in front. The handles and scabbards of these weapons, as well as the buckles and buttons on the girdles and belts, are often adorned with ornaments of embossed silver, in which kind of handicraft the Caucasian goldsmiths excel. A great value is set upon fine blades, that is to say, upon old ones. At the present time very good kindshals are manufactured in the Caucasus, but the greater portion of the schaschka

GRUSINIAN WOMAN.

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blades come from Solingen. Guns and pistols do not necessarily belong to the dress. The former, enclosed in cases made of shaggy goatskin, are worn slung to the back; the latter are stuck into the girdle, whilst the powder-horn is frequently carried in a small pocket below the cartridge-pouches. The mountain tribes formerly equipped themselves in chain armour, helmets of steel with neck defences made of rings, the arms and legs being likewise protected; but at the present day these articles have been mostly sold to collectors, and are only met with amongst the more opulent families, or in very remote valleys of the Caucasus, as, for instance, among the Chewsur tribe.

The above description relates to the dress worn by the men; as regards female costume less is to be said. Amongst the mountain tribes women mostly go about in tatters, whilst among Mohammedans they are so thickly veiled that their features are entirely concealed. The only female costume which strikes the eye as being characteristic, is that of the Kartalinians. Respecting the outer garment and jacket, little is to be said, except that they are generally of very bright colours. The manner in which the women decorate their hair is, nevertheless, remarkable; two or three long curls fall down on both sides over the ears, and upon the head is placed a kind of diadem, frequently consisting of red silk, adorned with gold and pearls, and from which a small gauze veil is suspended. This finery imparts a somewhat fanciful and romantic expression to the features, which, as a rule, are handsome

and regular, with large vacant eyes, and finely chiselled aquiline nose, and reminds the traveller of pictures of the high-born ladies of the Dusseldorf school. In the long run the characteristic monotony of trait, entirely deficient in individuality, becomes fatiguing. In the streets women put on a large thick veil, the tschadra, reaching to the knee and enveloping the whole figure.

The most remarkable event which occurred during our many days' stay at Kutais was a visit which we paid to the monastery of Gelati, at a distance of nine versts from that town. Early in the morning we rode off, mounted on good Cossack horses placed at our disposal, and accompanied by Count Tiesenhausen, an official of Kutais. Our road took us first through the ghetto of the town, a long street close to the left bank of the Rion. Here the opportunity was first afforded us of admiring the enormous fur caps of the Imeretinian jews. Generally speaking, the jews in the Caucasus, the greater portion of whom profess the Talmud, are little respected, more especially as they are excluded by the Armenians from the higher branches of commerce. To this rule the Kuraîm jews, who are friendly disposed towards Christians, and anti-talmudical, form an exception; there are a few small colonies of them in the Caucasus. At the end of the jews' quarter the road turns off from the valley of the Rion, and after an hour's ride through a beautiful green country, we came upon the monastery, which is situated upon a lofty eminence commanding

the valley. We soon arrived at the summit, and from the verandah in front of the archimandrite's dwelling we enjoyed a view so exquisitely beautiful that not again in the Caucasus did we see one to equal it. At our feet, fresh in verdure, lay the valley of the Tzchal-Tzitheli (Red River), a small stream which rises in the north-east amongst the Nakerala Mountains, and flows into the Kwirila below Kutais; in the background the picturesque mountains of Imeretia, through which the Rion shapes its course from the high mountain chain to the Colchis lowlands; and beyond that again, the more lofty mountains of the Letschgum and Radscha districts, amongst which, standing out in bold relief, was the proud rocky mass of the Chomli, to which formerly Prometheus was chained; and far away in the distance, visible through a break in the projecting mountains, and yet enormous from its immense height, towered the snow-clad summit of the Tetnuld. The transformation of shapes, the varieties of attitude, and above all, the splendid luxuriance of vegetation, threw an irresistible charm over the scene, and the clear weather and fresh morning-breeze helped to render the enjoyment perfect. As mass was being sung in the adjoining church—a circumstance of which we were made fully aware by the very unmelodious strains which proceeded from within—we had ample leisure to enjoy the beauties of Nature before turning our attention to art. After an interval the archimandrite appeared, a remarkably handsome man, whose dignified deportment was somewhat compromised by the circum-

stance of his wearing a grey broad-brimmed felt hat, which he had put on after the service was over. Under his guidance we commenced our wanderings through the interior of the monastery. The church is a Byzantine central edifice, with a cupola covered over by a conical green roof—a constantly recurring feature in the Caucasus. Giants must have aided in its construction, which dates from about the eleventh century, for the dimensions of the stones surpass everything which I have ever witnessed. Yet the work has been executed to such a nicety, that the joinings are as distinct and regular at the present time as they must have been seven hundred years ago. The walls, especially in the vicinity of the portals and windows, are adorned with flat relievi, an art in which the Byzantines were masters.

In purity of design, and as regards the ingenuity displayed in richly decorating naked surfaces without overloading them, our own architects have still much to learn. An ornament of frequent occurrence, especially on entrance walls, as well as on the apse, is a Latin cross, slightly protruding and surrounded on all sides by graduated flutings; simple in form, though varied by the different profiles of flutings and curved recesses at the points, it forms, perhaps, the finest decoration for a church façade. The interior of the church exhibits the customary form of a cross used for Greek houses of worship. The walls are completely lined with frescoes, amongst which two periods may be recognised. Some of the paintings are in the severe, repulsive style of

later Byzantine art, whilst others have evidently been restored in the Middle Ages, and at the time when the Italian school of painting was in full bloom. Some pictures appear at first sight to belong to the Renaissance period; but on closer examination it will be seen that only the ground work is more ancient, and that the restoration has been effected by artists at a later date, probably under the influence of Genoese masters, that city having formerly exercised a great sway over the country of Pontus. Modern times, too, have had a share in the restoration of these frescoes, for one unhappy picture has experienced the misfortune, certainly undeserved, of being freshly retouched by an artistically-disposed Russian colonel of gendarmes. The iconostas is entirely covered over with costly things, and glitters with gold and precious stones. The most prominent objects are two gold frames inlaid with a variegated mass of diverse materials. Some miniature pictures of the saints especially strike the eye. These latter have Greek inscriptions in *émail cloisonné*, which, on account of their beautiful design and model execution, must be ascribed to the most flourishing period of Byzantine art, and are consequently more ancient than the church itself. There are, besides, some stones bearing inscriptions, which, according to the statement of the archimandrite, no one had been able to decypher. Of these I took an impression, and a scientific examination of them in Germany has subsequently shown that these treasures of a Christian Church contain merely the names of the prophet Mahomet, and of the twelve imams,

together with another equally pagan inscription. The language is Arabic with Kufic characters. The church treasure is kept in a chapel. The sanctity of the spot must offer a satisfactory guarantee against thieves; for the one decayed chest with rusted lock, in which the precious relics are deposited, assuredly does not do so. The treasure consists principally of a number of ecclesiastical robes, mostly covered with pearls of great price. The most remarkable object is the crown of the Imeretinian kings, a kind of hood, covered over with pearls, and adorned with gold bands and buckles, and with the cross at the top. Wearing this crown on their heads, many of the earlier kings—generally possessing handsome faces and a mass of reddish hair—are represented in the frescoes of the church.

Besides the church, the tomb of King David of Imeretia, the mighty potentate of his time and founder of this holy place, is especially worthy of notice in the monastery. He lies close to the church in a ruined chapel, almost concealed by the ivy growing about it. His grave is covered with a massive slab bearing an inscription in the Chutzuri character, and here I first noticed how peculiarly adapted for monumental inscriptions this character is. No writing engraved on stone comes out with such wonderful effect as these old and apparently clumsy and disjointed letters. By his grave is deposited one of his greatest trophies of victory—the iron gates of the city of Gundsha (the modern Jelissawetpol) also bearing a chased inscription in the Chutzuri character. For a long time the gates were

considered to be those of Derbend, and the inscription upon them to be Kufic, when finally the error was discovered by the able investigator Brosset.

After a farewell look at the splendid panorama before us, we remounted our horses, and proceeded over a steep and stony road to the monastery of Motzamethi, distant only a few versts. It is scarcely possible to conceive a greater contrast than that existing between these two places. Whilst Gelati, proudly looking down from its lofty eminence, commands the country around, Motzamethi reposes modestly upon a rocky projection in the quiet valley of the Tzchal-Tzitheli, and is almost hidden away from sight by the surrounding foliage. Only at Lenkoran, on the Caspian Sea, did I chance again to find such luxuriant vegetation, although there the two shrubs were wanting—the laurel and the box tree—which form the chief attraction of the forests about Motzamethi. Here the box tree was growing to the height of twenty feet, and whilst the stem of the oak was being concealed beneath the noble laurel-leaf, ivy and the wild vine clambered up in the midst, and formed with interwoven tendrils a protecting roof against the sun. Amongst the trees were here and there rocks, and small glades, and down in the valley a trickling brook. The monastery itself possessed nothing particularly worth seeing, except a curious sarcophagus supported on lions, and we now began to miss the breakfast, which we had already foregone at Gelati, and to which we felt ourselves at noon fully entitled. A boy coming along with a basket of figs made up in

some measure for our loss. We returned home by a nearer path, which afforded us many a beautiful view of the Colchis plain; but the mountains on the far side were already wrapped up in the midday mist. On re-entering Kutais in the afternoon, everything foreshadowed coming rain, and left us but a dismal prospect for our intended excursion to Swanethia.

We had heard in Kutais so many attractive accounts of Swanethia, that we were not long in deciding to try our fortunes in this the wildest region of the Caucasus. I say the wildest region, for Swanethia has only during the last few years been subject to Russian supremacy; and this has not been the result of any magnanimous attachment on the part of the population to freedom and independence, but solely because the Russian Government had not previously considered it desirable to expend power and money in subjugating a tribe whose tax-paying capabilities were more than doubtful.

The following summary comprises more or less the description which we obtained at Kutais about the country, and the information, which I subsequently gathered from Radde's detailed account (*vide* last chapter) of his journey in those districts. Swanethia consists of the upper regions of the valleys of the Tzchenis-Tzchali and of the Ingur, extending from the sources of these rivers to the point where, abandoning their original directions from east to west, they turn towards the south. The superficies of the country is small. The valley of the Tzchenis-Tzchali is about

thirty-eight miles long to the point, where, as above-mentioned, it turns off, and the valley of the Ingur is only about nineteen miles longer. There are in the valley few flat patches of soil adapted for agriculture, and by far the greater portion of the area is occupied by forests, mountain pastures, and wildernesses. Notwithstanding its littleness, the country is divided into three clearly defined districts. Dadian Swanethia, called after the princely family in Mingrelia, which has possessions here, comprises the valley of the Tzchenis-Tzchali, and consists of three large parishes, Laschcheti, Tscholuri, and Lentechi. These parochial districts are however not closed cantons, but a complex of farms spread over many miles, which often stand together in small groups. The so-called Free Swanethia is the upper half of the Swanethian valley of the Ingur, with the districts of Uschkull, Kali, Adisch, Mushall, Mulach, Mestia, El, and Nenshar; the lower half of the valley of the Ingur, comprising the districts of Betscho, Latal, Pari, and Lachamuli, is called after the princely family of Dadischkilian, which has property here. Strictly speaking, the long uninterrupted independence of the country above mentioned refers only to Free Swanethia. In the other parts, although there was no question of payment of taxes, yet there did not prevail an entire disregard of authority, if we except one individual crime, the murder of Prince Gagarin, the Governor-General of Kutais, by Prince Dadischkilian, who was, however, speedily condemned and executed. Still in these regions, previous to the recent

expedition of Count Lewaschoff, which took place, if I am not mistaken, in 1869 or 1870, the traveller's life and property were not secure, if even he were prepared to defend them. The geographical situation of the country justified the exceptional attitude so long maintained. From Lower Mingrelia up the valley of the Ingur no regular communication exists; for between the extreme Mingrelian villages, Dshwari and Chuberi, and Lachamuli, the nearest Swanethian district, the river flows through a ravine about twenty-four miles in length, entirely uninhabited, and except on foot almost impassable. To the north, in the country of the Baksan Tartars, the chief mountain chain must be traversed over glaciers; and in the south a solitary border-path leads over the Laila mountains, which form the watershed between the Ingur and the Tzchenis-Tzchali. This latter track—the Latpari Pass—was crossed by the small expedition under Count Lewaschoff, who marched thence to Pari, skirting the districts of Free Swanethia. The population, although by no means amicably disposed towards the invaders, recognised the impossibility of resistance, and submitted without bloodshed. The only positive result of this submission has been the imposition of a very diminutive tax (I believe sixty kopecks per head), and security for life and property as regards Russian officials and travellers, of whom the latter do not yet number a dozen. Amongst themselves they continue, in accordance with their ancient habits, to commit robbery and murder indiscriminately and uninterruptedly. Opinions

differed formerly respecting the genealogy and character of the Swanethians. At the present time the tribe is pretty generally recognised to be an offshoot of the Kartalinian tribes, which in an earlier age had occupied a higher position, as attested by the ancient churches in the country and by old records, and which in the seclusion of its valleys had subsequently, after a period of bloom, sunk back into a state of barbarism, and had, even as regards the language, deviated so widely from neighbouring tribes and tribes of a like origin as to be unintelligible to them. In addition to this, it appears that even foreign elements have become intermingled with the population. In the country itself the inhabitants of Lachamuli are regarded to be of Jewish extraction, and Radde found the Semitic type conspicuously impressed upon their features. They are the only tribe in the country carrying on trade. Their religion, in so far as any exists, is Christianity. In the north some proselytes have been made to Islamism, and the village of Adisch is considered to be entirely Pagan.

Three different tours were proposed to us: to ascend the valleys of the Rion and of the Tzchenis-Tzchali to the Pass of Latpari, returning the same way to Kutais; or from the Pass of Latpari over the entire Free and Dadischkilian Swanethia, and down the Ingur ravine to Zugdidi in Mingrelia; or starting from Lascheti, below the Pass of Latpari, to cross over the mountains to the upper valley of the Rion, in the district of Radsha, and thence over the Nakerala mountains back to Kutais. We selected the first route prin-

cipally on account of our inexperience in travelling, for which reason we thought it advisable not to attempt too long excursions at first. Moreover, the path through the Ingur ravine, which was being constructed, was probably, from what we could gather, in an incomplete state, and we could obtain no information respecting the passes between Lascheti and the district of Radsha. On both these two routes we should have been reduced to the unpleasant necessity of employing carriers to convey our baggage. I can picture to myself in glowing colours how many a sturdy European tourist, considering a knapsack or soldier's valise amply sufficient to meet his daily wants, and aught else as sheer luxury, would treat with ridicule the anxious forethought which we bestowed upon our baggage. I have pursued this subject with more ample details in the last chapter, and will therefore merely remark here that we had been most urgently recommended to take with us cooking utensils and provisions sufficient to last several days, unless we wished to find ourselves, like Count Tiesenhausen, compelled to choose between two alternatives—suffering from hunger, or being reduced to eat millet paste, called Gomi, the national food, which is quite indigestible for European stomachs. We equipped ourselves as fully as possible in accordance with past experience and present counsels, ordered horses from a Jew in Kutais, and rose up on Friday, August 23, full of expectation.

Our first look at the weather was anything but reassuring; the street was swimming with muddy water,

and fresh torrents of rain were pouring down from the grey sky. Our horses, which were to have been ready at daybreak, were nowhere to be seen, and the waiter bestowed upon us the doubtful consolation that the person, from whom we had hired them was hardly likely to make his appearance with his animals, as the idea would never enter his mind that we should be determined to start in such weather. The waiter was, however, deceived in this respect, for after about two hours delay the individual arrived, with half-a-dozen miserable-looking, half-starved jades, apparently ready to meet their fate with dumb resignation. We learned for the future to abide by the sage maxim of first seeing our horses before we engaged them, and proceeded to fit on, as best we could, our saddles and baggage. This was no easy work to perform, for the girths of our European saddles, when taken up to the last hole, were still too long for the lank spider bodies of these animals, and neither the hirer nor his servant displayed the slightest willingness to assist Ali and ourselves in accomplishing the task. We were just on the point of doubting whether we should succeed in making a start or not, when, losing all patience, I gave the man, who was accompanying the horses, one or two unmistakable hints with my Nogaika. From that moment the position of affairs was changed, and everyone set to work with astonishing alacrity. The above-mentioned Nogaika is a whip with a wooden handle a foot long, and with a piece of

leather of the shape and size of a fly flapper, attached to the end of a switch, longer than it, and braided over with strips of leather. This instrument is easy to handle, very effective, and indispensable in the Caucasus. A traveller has rightly named it the key of the country.

All arrangements being completed, our disconsolate caravan marched out of the town in the pouring rain. Our troubles immediately commenced. The road, which ascended along the right bank of the Rion, was being paved, and a layer of gravel had already been deposited for that purpose, but unfortunately the rain, which must have continued the whole night, had converted the gravel and clayey subsoil into an impenetrable mass of slime, through which stronger animals than our wretched steeds would have found it hard to push along. The bridges which led over the numerous small tributaries of the Rion had been, without exception, carried away; and every now and then we were compelled to make extensive *détours* over very rugged country; the result of which was that as our baggage was very badly fastened on the horses' backs, it was continually coming off or getting loose, and thereby occasioning considerable delay. That under such circumstances we should be but little disposed to fully admire the magnificent scenery of the Rion valley is hardly surprising, and right glad we were after a ride of five hours and a-half, to reach the first Duchan in the little village of Nomochowanie, only fourteen miles from Kutais. Duchan is rather a difficult expression

to define. It is scarcely an inn, for all the accommodation to be had consists of the bare boards of an empty room with or without windows, and it cannot be called a shop doing a small retail business, for the only commodities to be obtained are salt, and meal made from maize, occasionally wine, and rarely bread. The Duchan of Nomochowanie was better supplied. We even got a chicken, apparently the only one in the place, and our horses regaled themselves with maize. It is true we had contracted for their keep with the person from whom we had hired the horses, but he had abstained from providing the attendant with fodder or money. The horses were compelled to purchase this unaccustomed delicacy at the price of continual contests with the pigs in the neighbourhood; for the latter, impelled by hunger or envy, disputed with them each grain of maize, and even grudged us our modest breakfast. The Nogaika, even here, however, came off triumphant. After a two hours' rest, when we started off again, not only were we all refreshed, man and beast, but the weather had some consideration for us, and the sun shone pleasantly upon the green valley, whilst the remainder of the clouds hung in dark masses about the peaks of the mountains. We now began to admire nature in her full splendour. The Rion, swollen and wavy, flowed through a valley thickly studded with oaks and laurels; on each side of the river were ever and anon rich meadows; and in the openings of the forest were fields of maize well cultivated and neatly enclosed (against the pigs); streamlets, forming themselves into

cascades, came rushing down the mountains, and on the lofty crests, in places not enveloped by the clouds, massive ridges of rock stood forth. The Chomli, to our left was, however, not visible from the road, and we were obliged to console ourselves with the thought that we had ridden under Prometheus' former abode. The sun was just setting, as we reached the village of Mekwen, but we determined to ride on to the next Duchan, about nine versts distant, not so much because Ali maintained that the inhabitants were all notorious robbers, but rather because the place itself did not seem to offer an advantageous prospect for night quarters. Further on, ascending over rocks, the road mounted up high above the river, and the last rays of the departing sun lit up for us once more a beautiful view of the valley, which close under our feet, seemed hemmed in by projecting rocks. To the right was visible—a few hundred feet above the Rion on a terrace-shaped break in the mountain—the reflection of a small lake, so modest and unpretending, that the five verst map of the General Staff—usually so accurate—had omitted it altogether. In the meantime night set in, and no signs appeared of the Duchan of Twischi. After riding a short distance further on the road, we recognised a light to the left. On chance I called out in Russian, and received, to my utter amazement, a reply in Russian that the Duchan was close at hand. Upon this we proceeded onwards. The rocks became more and more shut in, and finally we found ourselves in a dark ravine, the sides of which rose up perpendicularly,

whilst in the depths below we could hear the roar of the Rion without any longer being able to distinguish the river. There being no more question of riding, we dismounted, and led our horses, feeling for the way with our hands along the side of the rock. Finally a torrent, which came rushing down the rocks, brought us to a halt, and we had no other course but to turn back. On emerging from the defile, after roving about through deep mud, we succeeded in finding the house, in which I had seen the light, and were very cordially received by its occupant, a Russian policeman. Here we first had the opportunity to test the excellence of the German sausages which we had brought with us. In a few minutes' time we got ready a strong soup, and our Russian host did not know what to say for astonishment and bewilderment at the rapidity of the process. His amazement was increased when he saw us drinking our tea out of India-rubber cups, and when lastly we unrolled and inflated our waterproof beds (*vide* last chapter), he could no longer resist from arousing his fever-stricken comrade to show him these marvels. To the latter a good strong dose of quinine would have been at the time of more benefit than the sight of all our interesting things; and as we were provided with a travelling medicine-chest, we were also able to physic him.

The clouds, which the following morning still hung about the mountains, faded away in the rising sun, and we were able to admire in perfect safety the immense ravine, in which the previous evening we had nearly

broken our necks in the dark. The torrent which had compelled us to retrace our steps was not so formidable when viewed by daylight; still it would have been imprudent to have advanced further into the gorge by night, for the road was only broad enough for one horse to pass at a time, and whilst to the left the rock rose perpendicularly into the air, to the right down in the depths below the Rion was foaming. The Duchan we wished to reach lay completely at the end of the gorge; but the road was interrupted, the bridge over a rather considerable stream, flowing down from the Chomli, having been carrried away. We might easily have had an accident here in the dark. Beyond the Duchan the valley became broader and sunny; the forest showed several bare patches, and the summit of a hill was crowned by an old ruined castle. After a short ride we reached the spot where our path was to turn away from the Rion. Here we found a much frequented Duchan where we had a treat not to be despised. This consisted of red country wine, not only drinkable but even pleasant to the taste. Considering how much the cultivation of the vine has been neglected in the Caucasus, notwithstanding the circumstances favourable to its growth, and bearing in mind what fearful stuff the traveller is frequently compelled to imbibe, our astonishment at obtaining such wine will be readily understood. Not only was the wine itself worthy of notice, but also the cellar which contained it and the apparatus in which it was kept. This latter consisted of a big earthenware jug,

called in Grusinian Kwewri, and in the Tartar language Kufschin, which is manufactured in the country. Its dimensions are often fabulous, for some are found eight feet in height and four feet in diameter. The one in question was simply buried up to the neck in a corner of the Duchan, with an aperture left open for the purpose of drawing off the wine: a process which the innkeeper effected by merely letting down a scoop attached to a string into the depths of the Kufschin. The somewhat irremovable condition of the wine-cellar unfortunately gives rise to the presumption that in proportion as the old wine disappears fresh wine is simply poured in from above to supply the vacuum created. Those who arrive late can scarcely expect to obtain the same quality of wine as those who arrive early, and the circumstance that many very heterogeneous particles easily find their way into the wine through the ever ready orifice at the top is one hardly calculated to inspire with confidence the traveller in the Caucasus. But no one particular in this respect could remain long in the country.

Our route now abandoned the rather lively road in the valley of the Rion, and turned off again to the left into a narrow, beautifully wooded ravine, in the truest sense of the word romantic. The path which hitherto had been so small as to be impassable for European horses, was being made broader, and at one spot we met occupied in mining the rock about thirty wild looking workmen clad in picturesque rags. Some of the mines were being charged with powder at the

moment that we were passing by; but as the men greeted us most cordially, and gave no intimation of the explosion about to take place, we quietly continued our journey. Our terror may be imagined when the charges went off a few paces behind us, and stones were sent flying about in all directions. Fortunately no one was hurt, but we could not help thinking that the proceeding was rather an unceremonious one. The thousand echoes produced by the report amongst the surrounding rocks was, contrary to the Swiss custom, gratuitous. On reaching the end of the ravine, Lailaschi, our midday station, lay before us, not situated, as we imagined, down in the valley, but, to our disgust, on a mountain some thousand feet above it—exposed to the full glare of a broiling midday sun. Our poor horses, apparently left unfed by the attendant, for they hungrily snuffed about the blackberry bushes, refused so decidedly to make any further progress that in the end we were compelled ourselves to tug them up the steep mountain side, no pleasant task under a broiling sun. Ali and the baggage had vanished altogether, and we had some difficulty, when we arrived above in the village, in asking our way to the house of the chief of the district (Ujezdngj Natschalnik). Here we were received in the most charming manner by Mr. Bebureschwilli, a Gurian by birth, who, in the capacity of Chief of the Letschgum district—which according to the former division of the country belonged to Mingrelia—had for several years inhabited Lailaschi, the chief town or rather village. We gratefully ac-

cepted his invitation to remain at least for dinner. To our great astonishment we found ourselves addressed in German by a gentleman in European dress who joined us, and who turned out to be the justice of the peace for the district. He hailed originally from the Baltic Provinces, but found himself 'post tot discrimina rerum' cast adrift in this neighbourhood, where on a competency of 2,000 roubles, a salary far beyond the reach of any Prussian magistrate, he administers the law—on account of the distances practically without appeal—to the mountaineers of Mingrelia and to the Dadischkilian Swanethians. He told us that in the course of the year he decided 1,200 civil and 200 criminal cases. A second inhabitant of the place, also speaking German, appeared in the person of the constructor of roads, a Warsaw Jew, and it came out at last that our kind host had also visited Germany, and had brought back with him a few words of our language. The dinner had been prepared for upwards of a dozen guests who had been gradually arriving, and it forms one of the great events of our journey. This dinner deserves a somewhat detailed description, not so much on account of the fare set before us, which was very similar to that of our Tartar dinner at Kutais, but in consequence of the odd mixture of people who composed the society. The guests, with the exception of those above mentioned, were all natives of the country, and the greater part did not even understand Russian. This however, was no impediment to conversation, and still less to enjoyment,

The opposite ends of the table were presided over by most distinguished personages; at the upper end sat the archimandrite of the monastery, a fine old gentleman, and at the lower end was a Mingrelian princess who, like all women of that country above twenty-five years of age, had once been handsome. They both fasted, that is to say, partook of food in accordance with fasting. I never succeeded in ascertaining why they fasted, but I perfectly well recollect that they did do so, and the food, as is customary in the Caucasus, consisted of spinach, called Kinza, a circumstance not easily forgotten by those who have once smelt it. My right-hand neighbour was the wife of the Pristaw (high constable), a Grusinian lady, who spoke Russian fluently, and had emancipated herself from Grusinian toilette. She looked rather well in the European dress. The remaining ladies and gentlemen present were without exception attired in the national costume, and some of them were models of Caucasian type. The comic element was represented by a Prince Tschikowanni. His face, the living prototype of Punch, glowed with the deepest purple, and his performance at table proved that he had no desire to abandon that hue. In this country it by no means follows that because a man is born a prince, he is necessarily accomplished and wealthy. Many families bear the title, and it descends to all the sons, who may lack both property and education. The names of noble families in Grusia and in the other Kartalinian districts gene-

rally end in 'schwilli' or in 'dze;' both mean son, and this derivation is thus analogous to the Spanish hidalgo (son of some one). When the names become Russified, the termination 'schwilli' is generally changed into 'ew' or 'ow.' An exception is found to this rule in the case of the Bagritidze, the most distinguished family in the land, which calls itself Bagration. The Tschikowanni, Matshabelli, Tzeretelli, Gelovanni, and a few other families are said to descend from Genoese emigrants; such names as Ciecovanni, Macciabelli, Zeretelli, which have remained totally unchanged, undoubtedly lead to this conclusion. The family of our Prince Tschikowanni could hardly have been very prosperous, judging by his dress, which did not indicate wealth; and this is a tolerably fair criterion, for the nobility of the country would rather lavish the last rouble in purchasing some faultless object of attire than expend it in procuring the necessities of life. The sums paid by government to landed proprietors, as an indemnity for the abolition of serfdom, have been speedily squandered in such like extravagance, and, a few families excepted, the whole native aristocracy may be considered as completely impoverished.

The 'res angusta domi' had failed to impair either the prince's temperament or his complexion; and no sooner had the second course been served, when, impelled by his second nature, he pledged each one of us in a full bumper of red Kachetine. This good example

was speedily followed on all sides, and it needed a strong head to do justice to the many claims which custom imposed upon us. On this occasion I indulged in the following remark, interesting to every German student, that the Caucasian 'comment'[1] is most closely allied to the German 'comment.' For similar ceremonies exist here as amongst German students in reference to the before-drinking and the after-drinking, the emptying of glasses, and the proposal of healths; and great importance is attached to the strict observance of customary formalities. I only missed the institutions of the 'Bierjungen' and of the 'Salamander;' the beverage however is quite different. The following sentence is the customary one before drinking: 'Allah werdi' (Turkish), *God has given it*; whereupon the after-drinker responds 'Jachschi jôl,' a *fortunate journey*. Whenever a toast was proposed, which unfortunately for me was always done in the Grusinian language, some of the company, generally the ladies, commenced singing the following refrain, 'Mrawa shaemie,' *many years*. The singing was peculiar, and, with the exception of one tune, most unmelodious. It appears moreover to be the custom to sing through the nose, and to endeavour to impart an expression of rapture to the features. One tune, which

[1] 'Comment' is a ceremonial performed by German students when drinking a toast. It consists in appropriate sentences, which are recited after the proposal of the toast by the 'vor' and the 'nach' drinker; and in a peculiar mode of raising, emptying, and replacing the glass on the table, each action being carried out in accordance with special words of command.—*C. H.*

seemed to enjoy especial favour with the lady on my right hand, was about as follows :—

No system of annotation has, as yet, been discovered, capable of rendering the other tunes, for such a system would be obliged to distinguish thirds, fifths, and sevenths of a tone.

Considering the general harmony which prevailed, and the universal participation in the fun and merriment which was going on, we could hardly be surprised at finding ourselves called upon to sing, and we released ourselves from the difficulty by performing the 'Wacht am Rhein' and some student songs.

Toasts were then drank with full ceremonial to ourselves, our relatives, and our fatherland, after which we took leave of our kind host. He provided us an escort, and sent with us, as an interpreter for the Swanethian language, a Mingrelian of frowning aspect armed to the teeth. But the latter proved eventually to be a very inoffensive and particularly stupid individual. We were also promised better horses for the next few days. After a hearty leave-taking, we descended by a fearfully steep path the mountain on which Lailaschi is situated. and we did so at rather a dangerous quick pace, resulting possibly from the jovial state of our minds. We then forded the Ladshanura at a shallow place, and ascended the small ridge, which separates

the valley of this tiny river from that of the Tzchenis-Tzchali. The village of Muri is situated on this ridge; it is very extensive, and lies surrounded by luxuriant gardens and vineyards. I can scarcely tell whether it was the glorious illumination of the evening sky and the multitude of country folks in picturesque costumes returning from their work, which caused me to view Muri in so poetical a light; but these circumstances, combined with the romantic scenery around the spot, above which towered the defiant Castle of Orbeli, together with a view of the green valleys below, could hardly fail to deeply impress the lover of nature. From the watershed we glanced once again at the pleasant Lailaschi, just then lit up by the rays of the setting sun, and then descended towards the Tzchenis-Tzchali. At a point where the river flows through a steep gateway formed amongst the rocks, under the portholes of two castles—appearing, like the Swallow's Nest near Heidelberg, glued on to the mountain—a very lightly constructed bridge, over which but one person at a time could pass, led to our night quarters some hundred paces further on. This spot was the 'Chancellerie' of the district. Why we should have been directed to this draughty place instead of being quartered upon the peasants I never could comprehend. The inventory of the 'Chancellerie' comprised nothing extraordinary. It consisted of a box containing about twelve sheets of paper, and one inkstand, apparently empty. No further vestige of furniture was to be seen. During the night I had

ample leisure to solve the problem as to how the numerous fleas contrived to live, when no travellers passed that way. It is true they seemed famished.

The arrival the next morning of fresh and very serviceable horses afforded some consolation for the uncomfortable night we had spent. The police official, who found them for us, was a former officer of Cossacks, and was decorated with the St. George's cross; he escorted us part of the way, and manifested great pride in the bridge, over which we had crossed the previous day, it being his handiwork. Although it did not seem to us to be very substantially put together, still we could hardly withhold from him our admiration of a structure which was about a hundred feet long, and consisted merely of eight or ten beams and rafters. The road, a very narrow one, continued for several hours along the right bank of the roaring stream, and frequently in the closest proximity to it. All attempts by blasting or by constructing to create a road having been avoided, our path kept ascending and descending, and winding round projecting rocks, whilst the scenery was constantly changing. The forest landscape was one of the grandest that could be seen; although the box-tree did not thrive so well here at an altitude of 1,600 feet above the level of the sea, the laurel on the contrary flourished amazingly. The oak was still the monarch of the forest in less elevated regions, but at a height exceeding 2,000 feet the beech-tree reigned supreme. The plane, elm, chestnut, and linden were also to be seen; one of the latter, which I measured,

was thirty-three feet in circumference at a height of six feet from the ground. A countless number of birds enlivened the air; no one seemed to disturb their repose, for they were not frightened at our approach. We particularly noticed a species of jay, larger than the European, with variegated, black, red, and white plumage. 'Although several villages are described on the map as belonging to this tract of land, we only discovered from time to time a few miserable huts, almost entirely hidden away amongst the dense verdure. 'On one occasion, however, we fell in with a small crushing-mill, lying close to our path, but far from any human abode; a wooden hammer striking merrily on a shell was set in motion by a rivulet; but I could not ascertain for what purpose this apparatus should exist in the solitary depths of a forest. The traveller, Petzholdt, has, however, in these parts met with similar isolated machines.' On the road we encountered the first Swanethian, a sturdy fellow, whose felt hat, shaped in the Tyrolese fashion, occasioned us much astonishment; he carried his gun in a case of badger-skin, the fur of which was nearly a foot in length; but we could not, even at a high price, induce him to part with it. There seems, moreover, to be very little traffic in this valley when compared with the valley of the Rion, where we frequently fell in with peasants and packhorses going up and down the road.

Lentechi is situated near to a point on the Tzchenis-Tzchali, where that river, which flows from the east, makes a sharp bend southward. This place, although

LENTECHI.

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inhabited by Swanethians, still retains the characteristic features of a Mingrelian village. One peculiarity, however, attracted our attention; the vines, as in Upper Italy, are trained to run up stone pillars, and then across lathworks extending up and down the village street—a peculiarity which I never again noticed in the Caucasus. Modern culture has reached Lentechi in the form of a schoolmaster, whose credentials to European education seemed to be represented by a knowledge of the Russian language, and by the possession of a broad-brimmed felt hat, which ill-accorded with his national costume. He honestly confessed himself that attendance at school was far from being regularly conducted. As we had a considerable journey before us, we only stopped long enough to rest the horses. We had already observed, when riding through the village, that we were in a country where the sight of a European face is a rare occurrence, the younger portion of the population, especially the female, drawing shyly away from us, although the European is generally an object of curiosity. Directly above Lentechi the mountains close up forming a grand wild ravine, the scenery reminding me vividly of the finest parts of the Ilsen valley in the Harz mountains. Here, as in the Harz, a roaring torrent rushes onwards over jutting cliffs hemmed in by steep rocks, and through primæval forests of fir-trees; but the proportions are five times greater than in the Harz mountains, whilst ever and anon a stray laurel bush recalls to mind the southern latitude. It furnishes a grand and beautiful

contrast to witness the laurel casting, as it were, a veil over the aged trunk of many a mighty fir and pine. After traversing about seven miles of road, we crossed the river a second time, passing over a very primitive kind of bridge, when shortly afterwards the valley opened. A broad level country, well cultivated, separated two mountain chains, the crests of which were partly concealed behind streaks of snow, whilst the lower slopes were covered with forests. At a higher elevation the fir was replaced by the birch-tree, and above the altitude of 6,700 feet nothing remained to be seen but Alpine pastures. Instead of the half-hidden away, wooden huts of Mingrelia, rose up at the mountain edges, generally in groups numbering from three to six, stately farms, built of stone, with walls and massive towers crowned by battlements. These towers, some of which measure eighty feet in height, are built of stone and cement, and are invariably square and strongly constructed; they are quite in harmony with the customs of the country. Behind these towers the Swanethian, having committed a murder, retires for safety, dreading the old law of vendetta, which, in spite of the first elements of civilisation having penetrated into those regions, still reigns supreme; and there he remains protected by thick walls against every attack from without, until the deed has been atoned for by the payment of blood-money, or until grass has grown over it by the lapse of time. The villages produced a pleasing impression, the farms were in good substantial condition, the road and bridges kept in repair, and

each field, generally planted with millet and barley, was enclosed by a neat fence. The natives wore the national costume, although rather in a deficient condition; the head-gear consisted of the above-mentioned felt-hat, but we noticed some baschlyks, and the small cloth coverings already alluded to. We found the elders of the community of Tscholuri assembled in the road near a well, ready to receive through our interpreter the orders of the chief of the district. They appeared to be remarkably sturdy individuals of moderate height, with unkempt hair and ferocious beards, and a good many of them showed a tendency to goitres. The general impression produced upon us by those inhabitants which we saw was one of roughness and coarseness; still we did not suffer from any obtrusive conduct on their part, such as may have been experienced by other travellers. One act of tenderness, which in some measure disclosed the disposition of the people, attracted my attention; it was a small girl playing with a doll; on closer examination the doll proved to be a dead sucking-pig.

Our road descended a second time into a beech wood. It began to grow dusky, and still we could catch no glimpse of the Castle of Ludshi, our halting-place for the night. The interpreter had ridden on in advance, whilst Ali had remained behind with the baggage, and we found ourselves at last deep in the midst of a dense forest, in unknown regions. The position of affairs was becoming critical, when our Mingrelian reappeared, and, after searching about for

some time, we discovered a passage leading over to the right bank of the river. The Castle of Ludshi, a gloomy old ruin, was situated on the mountain slope some hundred feet above the stream. Close to it was a wretched-looking farmhouse. The occupants consented, after some negotiations, to give up to us a cowshed for night quarters. The shed was empty, the cows being away on the mountain pastures, and we were decidedly better off, especially in point of cleanliness, than we should have been had we been lodged at the farmhouse or at the castle. After we had been anxiously waiting a whole hour, Ali reappeared with the baggage; according to his version countless bands of robbers had been on the look-out to plunder our goods and chattels, but were dispersed and put to flight by his own personal intrepidity. We had learnt, however, by experience, to receive Ali's statements 'cum grano salis.' Having distinctly impressed upon the Mingrelian the necessity of punctual attendance at daybreak with fresh horses in order to ascend the Pass of Latpari, we received the unwelcome tidings that no eatables were to be obtained for love or money; upon which we settled down to our German sausages; and Ali also partook of them, heedless of the stings of conscience which pork, one of the ingredients, ought properly speaking to have aroused.

When, at the approach of dawn, we arose from our slumbers, no horses were to be seen, and the Mingrelian had disappeared. After waiting two hours without any better result, we decided to attempt the trip as best we could. We succeeded by signs and gestures, in en-

gaging a guide (even Ali the linguist, failed in rendering himself intelligible to the Swanethians), and we then set out on the expedition, our rifles slung to our backs—a precaution which turned out in the end to be by no means superfluous. The road, owing to a recent military expedition, was still in good repair, and our route was consequently not beset with difficulties. The path first ascended through thick woods, afterwards between rows of single birch trees, then traversing some Alpine pasture lands, where numerous herds were revelling, it finally reached the mountain chain which separates the Valley of the Ingur from that of the Tzchenis-Tzchali. Below us we could see the farms of Tscholuri lying dispersed in every direction; further up the valley was Laschcheti, the last village in Dadian Swanethia, and immediately in front of us was a steep mountain chain, behind which lay the upper valley of the Rion, the so-called Radsha district. The sun's rays had now increased to a perfectly scorching heat, and our costumes, especially our heavy riding boots, being little adapted for pedestrian expeditions, proved most troublesome to us when going up hill. It will therefore hardly be considered extraordinary that we should avail ourselves of an opportunity which unexpectedly came in our way. At about an hour's ride from the summit of the pass, we arrived at a well, the water of which was delicious, and at this moment two Swanethians on horseback overtook us. We at once endeavoured to obtain the use of their quadrupeds. One of the Swanethians, a young man who spoke

Russian fluently, came from Kutais, where he attended school, a rare occurrence for a Swanethian; the other from the brass plate which he wore on his chest, bearing the inscription 'Selskij sudja,' could be recognised as a village justice or bailiff. These two improved the occasion not only by asking us two roubles for the hour's ride, but by selling to us a piece of bread, of which we stood sorely in need, at ten times its original value. But we were so exhausted by the heat, and not being in 'condition,' by the fatigue of walking, that we readily acceded to any terms. The journey onwards became now an easy task, for we took it by turns to ride, and we should speedily have reached the summit of the pass, had not an unexpected delay arisen at a very short distance from it. This was caused by the two Swanethians, who, demanding twice the total amount agreed upon for the half-hour's ride, informed us that they must turn off by a short cut, which branched off here, and that we could have the horses no longer. This sum we naturally refused to give them, when they commenced to threaten us, pointing to their weapons. They seemed to be under the impression that our rifles were not loaded, but on noticing the rapidity with which a cartridge is introduced at the breech, they altered their tone, pocketed the two roubles, and with a volley of curses took their departure. Although this adventure was scarcely fraught with any great danger to ourselves, our three European breech-loaders being more than a match for their two blunderbusses, it nevertheless proved how

useful in these countries a rifle can be, in case of necessity, to inspire awe; and, later on, I was greatly interested to find it mentioned both by Radde and Freshfield, in their respective works, that similar incidents were of daily occurrence in Swanethia.

Our guide, who had remained a passive spectator of the above episode, now conducted us in a very short time to the pass-level, when suddenly, without any transition, a panorama disclosed itself to our admiring gaze, such as I have never witnessed in the Alps, notwithstanding all my expeditions amongst the glaciers. Before us lay the entire snow and ice-bound range of the Caucasus—a gigantic wall some 140 miles in length, extending from the Tsebelda to the Terek—the peaks rising up like towers out of the chain, or like advanced bastions standing forth to protect it on the north and south. So enraptured were we with the grandeur of the whole scene, that at first we never thought of searching for the principal mountains, or of consulting our maps for that purpose. At last we recovered from the overwhelming impression which this magnificent view had produced upon our minds, and—the stomach asserted its claims; we ate the rye-bread which we had just purchased, and finding it very palatable, our hearts softened towards the two evil-disposed Swanethians. We then ascended a projection lying eastward of the pass-level, which afforded us a more extensive *coup-d'œil*, and then endeavoured, with the map for our guide, to make out the chief points in the surrounding landscape. The elevation above the level of the sea—calculated by our

aneroid barometers, which were, however, not entirely to be relied upon—amounted to 9,579 feet, and that of the pass level was less by about 300 feet. The elevation of Ludschi being 3,914 feet, we must have ascended 5,665 feet. By means of our map and a compass we were able to determine the precise position of the different districts before us. Free Swanethia, spread out like a relievo-map, lay below us; on only one other occasion, from the Gunib Mountain in Daghestan, did I obtain an equally clear bird's-eye view of a country lying beneath me. At a point where the valley commences, and where the sources of the Ingur, which rise amongst three mighty glaciers, unite, lies the community of Uschkull. Although consisting of three groups (Murkmer, Tschubiani and Shiwiani), the inhabitants of which, according to Radde, live in bitter feud with one another, it appeared, from the point where we stood, to be a connected complex, and the mighty towers, crowned by battlements, caused it to resemble a city, such as we find represented by the old Italian masters. The clearness and tranquillity of the atmosphere allowed us with the naked eye, at a distance of more than five miles, to count the number of the battlements, and we could even hear the roar of the Ingur at the same distance; only now and then for a short time a slight mid-day cloud enveloped the crest of a mountain. Below Uschkull the foot of the valley became narrower, and the villages lay concealed behind projecting declivities. A singular phenomenon in this region struck us forcibly. Whereas in the vicinity of

Uschkull, the fields, which were apparently in good cultivation, ran up the mountain slopes in regular lines for many hundred feet, the forest-growth attained a far lower level than in the valley of the Tzchenis-Tzchali, whilst the upper portion of the valley at an elevation of 5,665 feet was quite destitute of it. In the absence of any better solution, it may be concluded that the proximity of such enormous masses of glaciers must prove a hindrance to vegetation.

Before us lay the principal chain in the Caucasus. The extreme crest to the westward was a lofty snow-mountain, rising in solitary grandeur from amidst a confusion of lower peaks, and which from its remote position (over ninety miles) must have been the solitary mountain in the land of the Abkhasians, which Freshfield sighted from the pass between Abas-Tuman and Kutais, and describes as lying perfectly isolated from the other snow-mountains. The next division in a west-north-west direction consisted of a lofty mass of snow-clad mountains, jutting out in a southerly direction from the main chain, and separating the sources of the Nakra and the Nenskra, two tributaries of the Ingur, at the point where it projected southwards; a ridge also branched off to the north, from the main chain, terminating with the Elburz, the monarch of the Caucasus, 18,526 feet high, called Minghi-tau by the Baksan Tartars who live in the neighbouring districts. The point has been frequently discussed whether the Elburz is visible or not from the Pass of Latpari; for instance, in Kutais it was disputed. I am quite satisfied in my own mind

that the mountain which we saw was the Elburz; for the line of the horizon and the estimated distance (thirty-eight miles) tallied minutely with the map; and the height of the mountain might, despite the distance, very easily be recognised from the circumstance that its snowy mantle occupied, in proportion, a greater sphere of elevation than that comprised by the highest of the remaining mountains. The difference of opinion appears to me to arise from the fact that the spot on which we were standing is also denominated Latpari, as well as that portion of ground situated a little further to the eastward and leading straight to Uschkull, the direction taken by our Swanethians. The Elburz must undoubtedly be invisible from the latter point, owing to the eminence upon which we then stood. Close to this knot of mountains, the branches of which projected north and south, rose up above the village of Betscho to the north-west, the Uschba mountain, also projecting southward from the main chain. Its jagged tower-shaped peak presents one of the wildest apparitions known in the category of high mountains. East of Uschla, a high pass, on which even cattle are seen grazing, leads northward across the Thyber glacier. Then follows for fifteen or eighteen miles a rugged ridge some 12,000 to 13,000 feet high, without, however, possessing any very prominent peaks. It terminates with the Tetnuld, lying immediately in our front—the most beautiful of all the mountains in the Caucasus; according to Radde, it should be called Tötönal. In the form of a gigantic pyramid it emerges from the

chain, ascending to a height of 16,000 feet, the dazzling whiteness of its snowy mantle together with its graceful shape producing an impression similar to that caused by the Jungfrau. To complete the comparison a conical peak, smaller, but equally beautiful, rises up close to it, like the Silberhorn in Switzerland. East of the Tetnuld rises the many-peaked ridge of the Schchara, called Nuamquam by the natives, concealing from sight the two mountains next in height to the Elburz, the Koschtan-taû, and the Dych-taû, which rise out of a short branch of the main chain, projecting northwards. The Dych-taû chain puts forth a multitude of peaks, which we, from our position, found it impossible to define, so close was the proximity of the one to the other. We noticed a mass of mountains with an infinity of branches, which possibly may have been the Adai-Choch group near the Mammisson Pass, whilst the mountains further in the background would be those at the source of the Ardon and of the Terek; and the Kasbek, situated beyond the sources of the latter river, might also have been visible.

A panorama such as this could easily bear comparison with any which Alpine scenery could produce; for although in Switzerland the elevation of the snow-line is greater, compensation is made in the Caucasus for this inequality by the prodigious altitude to which individual peaks attain. Nor is there any lack of glaciers, for on the Swanethian range of the main chain, extending over forty-two miles, we counted about ten of primary and twenty of secondary order; whilst many others may have been concealed from view by projecting

mountains. The Dadiasch, 10,550 feet in height, which has been ascended by Radde, offers a still more extensive view than the one of which we were spectators. It is to be regretted that that traveller, in his work, which in general is most complete, has not given fuller details of this view during his journey through Swanethia. The two works also of Radde and Freshfield supplement one another; the former writer treating the ethnographical and physical features, and consequently directing his attention principally to the valleys, whilst the latter in his capacity of tourist and mountain-explorer, has supplied very valuable information concerning the mountains and glacier districts of the country. The latter subject is of still more importance, as Russian topographers, notwithstanding the general accuracy of their maps, have devoted but little attention to ice and snow regions. Nevertheless neither one of these two travellers has ever visited the Pass of Latpari, although both crossed the watershed between the Ingur and the Tzchens-Tzchali, traversing the Pass of Naksagar, which is situated higher up and is somewhat impracticable. With regard to the nomenclature which, with reference to these districts, will be found in their respective works, it should be mentioned that Radde invariably retains names in local use, which differ, as a rule, from those employed by the general-staff map; and this difference is further increased by the numerous ways in which mountains are designated by surrounding tribes. The rule is that all mountain terminations in -tau, are

of Tartar, those in -choch of Assetinian, and those in -mta of Kartalinian origin. Radde has also cleared up an error occurring in most of the European maps, which contain, for instance, a high mountain pass between the Elburz and the Kasbek, designated ——mta ; in reality it only consists in an unimportant peak, not even covered with snow, the only merit of which is to be situated above the source of the Rion (Phasis, hence the name). Radde is also quite correct in this respect with reference to names of tribes, which he always renders in the original form. He writes, for instance, Swan, Imerian, Mingrel ; whilst I, on the contrary, have adopted the usage of German-speaking Russians, who say Swanethian, Imeretinian and Mingrelian.

Having devoted three whole hours to the glorious view, we began to think of returning, when we were startled by an unexpected apparition. It was that of a Swanethian on horseback, approaching from the side by which we had come, and mounted, as we immediately perceived, on one of our European saddles. Our first impression was that the defenceless Ali had been despoiled of our baggage, and that the villagers were arriving to relieve us of what little remained about our persons. However, scarcely were our guns loaded than our anxiety vanished on recognising our Mingrelian, who, fearing lest we might complain to the district chief of his dilatory behaviour, had hunted up all the available horses in the neighbourhood, and come after us. As he stood before us his countenance assumed such an expression of humility, that we had not the

heart to scold him, especially after enjoying, as we had done, the glorious beauties of Nature. At four o'clock we mounted the horses, and rode down to Ludshi. The evening was mild and fine, and we soon forgot the troubles of the morning. At the foot of the mountain we encountered Ali, who had passed the whole day in the direst apprehension of robbers. Fortunately he had secured a fowl and some beans, otherwise we should have gone hungry to bed.

The return journey from Ludshi to Lailaschi presented no novel features. We wished, if it could possibly be effected, to reach the same day the house of the hospitable district chief, and consequently had to leave Ludshi before daybreak. By no other means could we have accomplished in one day a journey of forty-two miles over a road, not a quarter of which was level ground. Our horses had had rest and fodder on the previous day, and were refreshed, and the servants who were with them had been excited by the prospect of a good *pour-boire* to speed and punctuality; an inducement which wrought the desired effect, for by 5 A.M. the next morning every one was in marching order. The distance to Lentechi was got over briskly in the cool of the morning, the only incident which occurred on the road being that of a Swanethian, tending pigs in the forest, who, probably in the anticipation of a sultry day, had deemed it unnecessary to array himself in the smallest article of apparel. But his notions of propriety were, apparently, not in the least disturbed by this deficiency, for he greeted us with a

friendly 'good morning.' Beyond Lentechi, where we halted for a few hours, the heat became so oppressive that our horses, in spite of their willingness, could advance but slowly. Resigning ourselves to our fate, we walked up the heights of Muri, whilst the pack-horses, panting and pausing every instant, followed at the slowest possible pace. Still we were obliged to make progress, if we wished to secure tolerable quarters that night for ourselves and our horses. When we had ascended the heights of Muri, and found ourselves opposite to the acclivity of Lailaschi, a storm was brewing in the sky, and we did not yield to the temptation at the passage of the Ladshanura, to quaff the good wine of the duchan, although our thirsty palates stood sorely in need of it. We also walked up the hill of Lailaschi, leaving the horses to climb up by themselves, or seek their own shelter for the night. We were hardly able to understand how a few days previously we could have performed the ascent in a few minutes, whilst now it seemed an eternity before we attained the summit. Hardly had we reached the village in spite of the darkness, and been welcomed by our kind host, when a storm burst forth, the like of which is unknown in Europe. The tempest and rain threatened to wash from its foundation the wooden building which contained us, and for hours together one flash of lightning was succeeded by another. What must have been the fate of a party of Grusinian ladies, who that very afternoon had passed us on the road, attired in the gayest of silk dresses, and attended by a large retinue of servants!

Apart from the gaudy spectacle which their gay costume presented in the green forest, we had been struck by the sight of all these ladies mounted on horseback without exception like men, which is the custom in the East. I only fell in with one lady using a lady's saddle. This was a princess Tschawtschawadze in Kachetia. Our host proved his knowledge of life by providing us in the first place with a good supper. It may doubtless seem very prosaic to be so constantly alluding to the wants of the body but, after the very scanty fare of the last three days the inner man asserted its rights.

The following morning the rain continued to pour away steadily, and, our fresh horses not having yet arrived, we had full leisure to become acquainted with the monotonous nature of country life in the chief village of a district like Lailaschi. With the exception of the few officials previously mentioned, no sociable individual is met with from one year's end to another, and this circumstance creates a feeling most depressing to all Europeans transferred to such places. Lailaschi was so far an exception to the rule that a Russian, suffering from the chest, happened to be residing there for the air-cure. The climate is said to be very favourable, as the elevated portion above the valley is a guarantee against fever, which does not ascend so high, whilst the altitude, amounting to 2,850 feet, is not sufficiently great to render the climate raw. The slender construction and interior economy of human dwellings in these parts are quite in accordance with the nature of the climate. The house of our amiable host was un-

mistakably arranged in Eastern fashion—that is to say, with plenty of space and but little furniture, the most prominent European article being a small apparatus for manufacturing seltzer-water, which he had purchased in Germany, and which, notwithstanding its fragility, he had succeeded in conveying without any mishap to Lailaschi.

The rain having subsided in the afternoon, and our horses having one by one put in an appearance, we took leave of our host with expressions of sincere gratitude for the hospitality which we had enjoyed under his roof. I received, besides, as a souvenir, the horns of a wild goat, which had been recently shot, and the flesh of which we had eaten. It tasted like mutton, with a slight flavour of game, but was rather tough. The wild goat of the Caucasus, called Tur, is tolerably abundant in these districts, and at a day's journey from this, on the properties of the Dadian, a princely family, most successful battues take place. The shooting is so arranged that the game is beaten towards a single outlet, consisting of a ravine amongst the rocks, where the guns are placed. Our host expressed his regret at not having been sooner made acquainted with our *penchant* for horns, as in that case he would have obtained a supply of them from the neighbouring villages.

As we only contrived to make a start at 5 P.M., we were compelled to halt for the night at the Duchan of Twischi, the same which we had fruitlessly endeavoured to reach on the outward journey. The keeper of the duchan seemed to possess some faint conception of

European comfort, for in his apartment there was a bench to sit down upon, and the walls were papered: luxuries which must be prized by the traveller in proportion to their rarity. The weather had entirely cleared up during the night, and our ride to Kutais would have been accomplished with ease had not the attendants again neglected to feed the horses. We could therefore scarcely wonder at their refusing towards the close of the journey to proceed at all, and we made our entry into Kutais at the most dismally funereal pace. Passing by, we noticed a very curious waterfall, which had carved out of the schistous rock a regular flight of stairs with rectangular steps. The latter numbered about twenty, were a foot in height, and of equal dimensions, a circumstance which conduces to the belief that they must have been the work of man's hands. On arrival at Namochowanie, both ourselves and our horses were again brought into fearful conflict with the pigs of the neighbourhood.

On reaching Kutais, we found the Hôtel de France richer by two new arrivals. These were two Englishmen, who had come from Vladikawkas by the Mamisson Pass, and who purposed starting from Kutais, making within the space of four weeks the tour to Teheran, by Tiflis, Erivan, and Tabreez; thence to the Caspian Sea, by Resht: a journey comprising a total of 475 miles to be performed posting, and 700 miles to be ridden on horseback. It appeared that two Englishmen had been staying at Kutais during our former visit; but I was unable to ascertain the nature of their

travelling plans. Another traveller residing at the hotel was a professor of jurisprudence from Odessa, commissioned by the Government to collect law antiquities amongst the different tribes. He seemed equally to be in a great hurry, for three days sufficed to study the law antiquities of the Abkhasians (with whose language he was unacquainted), and he intended to devote still less leisure to the Swanethians. Our time was chiefly employed during our second stay at Kutais in the very prosaic occupation of unpacking and repacking our goods and chattels in anticipation of the journey by mail-cart. As everything in a Russian telega infallibly ends by being shaken to pieces, travellers are advised to be especially careful in packing up their baggage, if they are anxious to see any portion of it arrive safely. In our own experience, the contents of a box full of insect-powder has been known to penetrate into a tin containing extract of meât, although neither case had been previously opened; the fine dust, in consequence of the jolting and shaking of the vehicle, having forced its way through the tight corks. On opening our trunks, which we had left behind at Kutais, and which were tightly fastened down, we were not very agreeably surprised to find them infested by a legion of cockroaches; and in such multitudes had they arrived, that all our clothes and linen were covered by them, and out of each fold these not very pleasant-looking creatures emerged in masses. Finally, we were obliged to strew handfuls of insect-powder amongst all our things in order to get rid of these unwelcome

guests. Meanwhile our Caucasian dresses had been got ready, and we completed the costume by purchasing some arms. Having ordered two telegas for the next morning, we spent the evening in the company of our acquaintances. The conversation naturally turned upon our trip to Swanethia, and upon our future plans.

The road, as far as Kwirila, the second station, situated on the river Kwirila, a tributary of the Rion, presented no very remarkable views. It conducts along the projecting mountains, which slope towards the Colchis plain, and every now and then one of the snow-crowned summits of the main chain belonging to the range, watered by the sources of the Rion, peeps through a break in the mountains. To the right lies the plain, which gradually becomes narrower, and behind it the range of mountains forming the Little Caucasus. Near the station of Kwirila the road joins the railway again. When we passed by—the railway still terminated here—but a few weeks later on, the line was opened as far as Tiflis. In consequence of the important traffic, which necessarily accumulates here, both the railway station and post station possessed more spacious accommodation than would otherwise have been the case. In the former there was also a pretty good restaurant. We saw here for the first time the powerful double locomotive engines (Fairley's system) employed to ascend the steep gradients which occur in the Suram mountains; but even these engines at the official trial only succeeded in drawing four

double-axled carriages over the gradients. The mountains of Great and Little Caucasus closed up behind Kwirila. Here begins the range of mountains, which branching off in a southward direction at the source of the Rion, runs towards Achaltzick, and separates the basins of the Black and Caspian Seas. The road leaves the valley of the Kwirila and enters the valley of the Tschcherimela, a small tributary river. I confess that the scenery of the Suram Pass, the ascent of which commences at this point, somewhat disappointed me. It is so romantically described in the pages of Murray's 'Russia,' that I expected to find something finer and grander still than the splendid valleys of the Rion and of the Tzchenis-Tzchali. Instead of this I merely perceived some scantily wooded valleys; and as regards the lofty castles which, according to Murray, crown the heights on every side, I only noticed here and there a crumbling old ruin. I should, however, add, in palliation of the above statement, that the heat was intolerable, and that it became a very difficult task for us, seated in our wretched telega, to dispel the discomfort of bruised bones by the indulgence of romantic illusions. The railway frequently runs along the side of the road. An engine which had come off the rails, had considerately selected a spot on the opposite line. There it lay capsized, and apparently enjoying repose after the fatigue of ascending such unheard-of gradients. At Bjelogorie, the second station past Kwirila, situated below the old castle of Tschcheristziche, we were brought to a halt, owing to the postmaster having

no more horses. After examining the stables, and closely investigating the station-book, we are bound to testify for once that he had not told a lie (rare occurrence!). It being still pretty early in the day, and as we were amongst the first arrivals, we obtained at least a tolerably good room wherein to pass the night; but many of those who came in later must have fared very badly in respect of accommodation. Bjelogorie and the adjoining district are the seat of what apparently is a very ancient industry. Jugs, curiously shaped and prettily decorated, specimens of which we had already seen at Kutais, are manufactured here. No supply was to be found at the one solitary shop in the village, and much to our regret, we were unable to obtain a souvenir of an art-industry which dates possibly from a Byzantine era. The station gradually became full with a crowd of travellers, all anxious to catch the steamer for Odessa, which was to start in two days' time. It was highly amusing to witness the several grades of resignation which the different arrivals displayed on being refused fresh horses. The post-master did not permit the cares of office to lie heavily on his shoulders, for he disappeared altogether, leaving the passengers to the mercies of a waiter, speaking German. A splendid evening compensated for a hot day. The mountains, which before looked barren and desolate, appeared to become reanimated, and when twilight set in even the old castle above our heads had assumed greater dimensions, until its small crumbling ruins became transformed into a mighty chateau. The beds, as in most post-stations,

consisted of wooden frames, which, in order to replace pillows, rise up at one end in a conical shape. Of course, for a night's rest our travelling-beds were infinitely superior.

On waking up the following morning we received the first unwelcome news during our journey. We learned that our travelling-companion Von Wurmb was taken ill with fever. This incident compelled us to hurry on as speedily as possible to Borshom, where we hoped to find better quarters as well as medical advice. From Bjelogorie the road, winding up steep curves, ascends along the valley of the Tschcherimela, which here takes the name of Moliti. The railway however despises even these zig-zags, and climbs up the mountain over gradients positively incredible. This circumstance, together with a talus in the loose vein of 60°, not walled up, prove conclusively that the contractor's object was merely to run up a line, without constructing it for practical purposes. The forests, mostly containing beeches and very little undergrowth, approached the road on each side; they appeared burnt up by the sun, and could not be compared with those which we had seen before. The road was well constructed, in good repair, and much frequented. Goods were being transported on long lines of 'arbas,' high carts, with gigantic wheels cut out of boards without spokes, and drawn along by buffaloes. The buffalo is an indispensable animal in mountainous districts for the transport of heavy merchandise. Two of them will draw a load which would often prove too great a

burthen for eight horses; and the passion of the animal for drawing weights is so remarkable, that, when, nothing else will suffice, it will frequently go down on its knees to utilise to the utmost the drawing-capabilities of its uncouth frame. The buffalo is nevertheless a mild good-tempered beast, and quite harmless. Apart from its slow pace, it possesses but two defects, both of which are fully redeemed by its drawing-powers. Firstly, it is very sensitive to cold, and cannot, consequently, be employed during the entire year; and secondly, it has a great passion for the water. If on a hot day it spies out an accessible pool, it immediately wades in, dragging its burthen along with it, and no human being can induce the animal to stir out again until it is completely satiated with the bathe. The buffaloes here are remarkably large and powerful when compared with others which I saw later on, and I only recollect noticing at Bagdad similar gigantic brutes.

Having started early in the morning, we found no lack of horses at the post stations of Moliti and Ponia, and at 10 A.M. we had already reached the summit of the Pass (3627 feet), which forms the boundary between the countries of Imeretia and Grusia (Georgia) and the governments of Kutais and Tiflis. In front of us lay the broad sun-burnt valley of the Kura, surrounded by mountains of rather uniform shape, and to the left might be seen some of the snowy crests of the main chain of the Ossetes, out of which country the Ardon flows northward, and the Ljachwa southward.

Although the valley of the Kuralies is here at a rather high elevation, the extreme altitude of the slope does not exceed one thousand feet, but the acclivity itself was so abrupt that even the railway made a wide bend to the southward. Suram is situated at the foot of the pass. It is a small spot, above which towers a castle erected on an isolated rock. It appears from a legend of the place that, in order to render the castle impregnable, the only son of a widow was immured here, and the Grusinian ballads still preserve the touching farewell scene which took place between the mother and the son. Hardly had we reached the station of Tschaly, situated a few versts beyond Suram, a point where the roads to Tiflis, Kutais and Borshom-Achaltzich cross one another, when the heat again commenced to be so oppressive that we became seriously anxious about continuing our journey with our fever-stricken comrade. To halt was out of the question, and, after a short rest, we resumed our route to Borshom, the drive being rendered doubly uncomfortable by the bad condition of the road and by the miserable telega in which we travelled.

The valley of the Kura narrowed a second time some five miles beyond Tschaly, and woods again approached on each side to the very edge, leaving just room for the roaring Kura and the road. The nature of the landscape was however completely changed. The beech-tree had been supplanted by the pine, which had now become the exclusive tree of the forest; and, were we not reminded of the East by the many

arbas, drawn along by teams of buffaloes, and driven by wild-looking Grusinians, we might have fancied ourselves transferred to the Black Forest. Although the scenery grew more beautiful in proportion as we advanced, we nevertheless rejoiced to think that a distance of only a few miles separated us from Borshom; for apart from the illness of our companion, the two days' journey in a telega were more than sufficient to dull all sense of appreciation, even in the most ardent admirer of the beauties of nature. We reached Borshom in the course of the afternoon; and found at the Crown-house good accommodation, and the prospect of medical attendance.

Borshom is situated on the right bank of the Kura at a point where two romantic side valleys—only some hundred paces distant from one another—the valley of the Tschawi-Tzchali (in Russian Tschornaja Retschka) and the valley of the Borshomka, the latter of which commences its existence at the junction of the Gudsharetis-Tzchali and the Bakuriani-Tzchali, enter the main valley. The original and least important portion of the place is situated close to the Kura, whilst the quarter which contains the villas, the Crown-house and Kur-house lies in the narrow ravine of the Tschornaja-Retschka, which at one spot widens in the form of a kettle. Borshom owes its rise principally to the medicinal springs, which, next to those of Pjatigorsk on the northern border of the Caucasus exercise the chief attraction to those amongst the Caucasian public, who delight in watering-places. Another scarcely less

important element is the healthy condition of the climate, which in summer is free from fever; and, owing to the altitude of 2630 feet, the heat is less oppressive here than at the barren sun-scorched Tiflis. But the great charm is the beauty of the surrounding scenery. The valley of the Kura, as well as the two deeply immerged side-valleys which, at a distance of a few hundred paces, run parallel with another for nearly five miles, and also the narrow rocky plateau between them, on which the so-called Worontzoff Park is situated, affords an inexhaustible supply of most enchanting walks! Ravines half concealed by pine trees, plashing brooks, and new vistas starting up ever and anon at every turn of the path, abound in this spot; and the eye now ranges over lofty mountains crowned with rocks, now wanders along peaceful meadows in the wood, or gazes at the ruins of some ancient monastery. This country must have experienced better times, for whether in the depths of the forest or in the most obscure Grusinian village, the traveller is constantly stumbling upon churches and chapels, the wonderful architecture of which points to a great period of art.

Another event within late years has greatly contributed to the prosperity of Borshom. The Grand Duke Michael, brother to the Emperor, and successor to Prince Bariatinski in the governorship of the Caucasus, has made this town his summer residence. It would have been hardly possible to make a more favourable selection. The situation between Tiflis and

the Black Sea, either of which points may be reached in a few hours by rail, the splendid environs and the abundance of game—the Grand Duke is a keen sportsman—must have made Borshom appear pre-eminently adapted for summer quarters. The château, or rather the villa, of the Grand Duke is situated on the opposite side of the town on the left bank of the Kura, which is crossed over by a bridge with stone arches. It is constructed in the style of an agreeable country mansion, and is surrounded by grounds which are being laid out as a park, but these latter works are not as yet far advanced. Almost immediately in the background lofty crags rise into the air, and upon them, both in the morning and evening, herds of chamois may be recognised from the valley. The Grand Duke and his family spend the entire summer and early autumn months here, and every traveller will carry away a grateful recollection of the hospitality vouchsafed to him in this house.

Borshom, as already stated, consists of two parts; the original quarter, containing a few unimportant shops and some small one-storied houses, and the quarter where the villas are situated. There being no hotel, and as the Crown-house only possesses accommodation for passing travellers and not for regular visitors, each family is obliged to rent a villa in advance out of the thirty or forty which exist. A small but elegant Kur-house, comprising reading-room, restaurant, and a pastry-cook's shop, and provided with a special band of music, lends an impetus to social enjoyment. The

SOUKHOUM : VILLA OF THE GRAND-DUKE MICHAEL, IMPERIAL LIEUTENANT.

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bathing establishment, a model of comfort and cleanliness, lies next to the Kur-house, and immediately behind it is the ravine of the Tschornaja Retschka, a far more engaging spot for a 'constitutional' than can be met with in any German watering-place. The military suite of the Grand Duke are lodged in the Crown-house, a long one-storied building. Vacant rooms are reserved for travellers, and here we found not only good accommodation for ourselves, but comfortable attendance for our invalid companion. The French couple, who had charge of the house, laid aside all political considerations, and bestowed upon him the greatest possible care and attention. We were informed to our regret, by the doctor, a German, that the state of health in which he had been thrown by the fever would not admit of his taking part in our excursion to Armenia; and we therefore determined to undertake the trip by ourselves, leaving our companion to take a thorough rest in Borshom, and then to travel direct to Tiflis *viâ* Gori, and rejoin us there. The days which we spent in Borshom were golden times for Ali. He led a life of perfect idleness, devouring at our expense all the butter and sugar in the larder; we must, however, say to his honour that we never caught him again indulging in similar excesses.

A charming little excursion which we made in company with some of the Grand Duke's suite deserves description. In the cool of the morning we ascended on horseback the valley of the Borshomka, passing by

the little village of Daba, which contains interesting ruins of a church, and rode on as far as Timothisubani, a monastery about ten miles distant from Borshom. We noticed on the road some monks' cells situated in the inaccessible, perpendicular walls of the rock, and which could only be reached by a rope ladder; this circumstance proves that fine scenery must in olden times have exercised over anchorites a great power of attraction, although to modern ideas their method of enjoying nature may appear remarkable. Timothis-ubani (so, at least, I fancy it was pronounced; in the map it was written Timothis-umani), is situated in the midst of an extensive forest of fruit trees, which after many centuries' neglect have grown wild, and, having assumed the appearance of forest-trees, have attained a size quite unknown to Europeans. Remnants of walls are all that at present exist of the monastery, but the church is in good repair. It is built of tiles with a stone roof, a feature which I never met with again, and the drum of the conically-shaped dome is decorated with variegated glazed tiles, to all appearance a token of Persian influence. The interior contains some well-preserved Byzantine frescoes. After a long interruption divine service is again celebrated within these walls. This is owing to a circumstance of almost legendary character. Some time ago a Russian soldier, having accomplished eighteen years of service, returned to his native land. He found on his arrival none of his family and none of his acquaintances, and so great was the feeling of loneli-

ness and desolation which o[ver]e him, tha[t] he resolved to wander about the [c]ountry until he should discover a spot, where as an [h]ermit he might end his days. After having perform[ed] pilgrimages to Solovetzk in the White Sea, to Borowsa, near Moscow, and to the Monastery of Petscherski near Kief, the three most holy shrines in Russia, he wended his way southward, and found at Timothis-ubani the spot for which he was seeking. To him is due the merit of having placed the church in repair, and of carefully watching over it, a task in which he is supported by the government. The impression which this modern hermit produced upon me was that of a pleasant, decent sort of a fellow. In the country round about he already stands in the odour of sanctity, and should accordingly be forgiven, if he has veiled the modern pictures of saints over the venerable Byzantine frescoes, and continues to read mass, clothed in a soldier's grey mantle.

We had a charming surprise on the way back. From Daba, instead of riding through the valley over the same road by which we came, we ascended the mountain to our left, and suddenly found ourselves in a dense copse opposite a second ruin. It was a little chapel, over which a rock projected, and which was so hidden away in the recess of the forest as to be only visible to those who were close to it. It is built of light-coloured stone, and especially on account of the ornamentation of the walls, is, in an architectural point of view, a perfect little jewel. The rock situated by its side, from which flows a limpid spring, and the

v[illegible]ure which sur[illegible] it in every direction, impart t[illegible] the pi[illegible]re so m[illegible]ous and lovely an aspect that I w[illegible] urge any tr[illegible], who might find the ride to T[illegible]this-ubani to[illegible] for them, to make at all e[illegible]ts this excursion, which can be done on foot. It is to be regretted that no photographs of these exquisite specimens of architecture can be purchased. It is true that Prince [illegible]ubetzkoi, on behalf of the government, caused photographs to be made of the finest examples of Grusinian ecclesiastical architecture, which were arranged with great taste in a valuable album. But a limited number of copies had been taken owing probably to the want of demand for them; and I could not ascertain where the plates were to be found. From [illegible] the road led across a plateau between [illegible] small rivers; and finally through the ravine of the Tschornaja Retschka back to Borshom. I should here mention that, contrary to the map, which I followed as a guide, it is the southern stream which at Borshom is called Tschornaja Retschka.

We were invited by the Grand Duke to a battue, which was to take place on one of the following days. In order to be at the appointed spot by daybreak, we started at 4 A.M., and rode up a steep hill, situated beyond Borshom on the left bank of the Kura. I was mounted on a Kabardan gelding out of the Grand Duke's stables, which at first sight I should have mistaken for a Mecklenburgh half-bred. Notwithstanding its size and apparently heavy frame, it clambered up the steep and stony path with astonishing cleverness. Natives

of the Caucasus attach great importance to a good ambling gait, called in Russian, 'projezd,' and, as a matter of fact, the horses themselves prefer this pace, both speedy and comfortable to the rider, and display great powers of endurance under it. The amble-trot, although graceful to witness, bears the rider along with such rapidity, that for instance, when returning through the valley, we had to break off into a sharp canter in order to keep up with the grey amble-trotting stallion ridden by the Grand Duke. On reaching the crest of the hill, we obtained a fine view of mountain and forest district, in which, however, a fire had lately made great havock. Large tracts looked brown and desolate. The first battue brought out two stags, one of which was shot, and several roe-deer. The second was more productive in game, but the steep and rocky ground presented such insuperable difficulties to the beaters that only one roebuck passed within range, whilst many chamois and stags escaped. I had no opportunity myself of firing a shot, none but hinds coming my way. Very erroneous views are circulated, especially in Russia, about sport in the Caucasus. The following is a brief summary of the information which I obtained on this subject from the Grand Duke Michael, the first sportsman of the country, from Professor Radde of Tiflis, the first zoologist, and from other reliable sources.

The Caucasus contains, with the exception of the lion, every species of game known to exist in Europe and Western Asia. The tiger, which is pretty frequently met with in the Persian provinces of Mazen-

deraun and Gilân, formerly made incursions into Daghestan and Kachetia. At present it is only to be met with at Lenkoran on the Caspian Sea, where several of these animals are yearly destroyed; but even there, as the chief of the district assured us, fine specimens are extremely rare, and he himself during the last four years had been unable to obtain a really good skin. Those primeval forests, which harbour the tiger, form also the retreat of a more inoffensive creature, the hedgehog. Single leopards are met with at Lenkoran, in the Karabagh, and even in Kachetia. A specimen has been seen at Tzarskie-Kalotzy, not many years ago, at a battue. Hyenas are occasionally found, and some are even shot near Tiflis. I could not obtain any information respecting the lynx and the wild-cat: but these animals can scarcely be missing here. Bruin is at home throughout the whole country, but the species in the Caucasus is smaller than that which inhabits Russia, and the fur is always of a bad colour, generally grey or yellowish. Bears seem to be here as little dreaded by the people as in North Russia; but they must frequently prove dangerous guests to the herds in the mountains. Wolves are also to be found, but I did not learn whether, as in Russia, they keep together in packs during the winter. In Armenia a large wolf once crossed the road about ten paces in front of me. I happened to be without my gun, but the animal did not take the slightest notice of my presence. Foxes and jackals are abundant; the latter are a nuisance on account of their nightly howlings, but in other respects

they are quite harmless. The wild boar is found chiefly in slopes above rivers, and, not being molested by the Mahometan inhabitants, often attains an amazing size. In the museum at Tiflis may be seen a specimen weighing 21 pud (757·68 lbs.) Every year the Grand Duke holds most successful boar-hunts in the so-called Karajaz steppe, not far from Tiflis; and these animals are said to be very plentiful along the Arax in the neighbourhood of the Ararat. The Caucasus still harbours in remote and almost uninhabited mountain-valleys, at the sources of the Kouban near the Elburz, a rare species of game, the ure-ox (Bos taurus ferus), of which the Tiflis Museum possesses a very fine specimen. Its existence has only in latter times been traced with certainty. The game most characteristic of the Caucasus is the wild goat. It is to be met with over the entire range of the main chain, and appears still to abound in great numbers; although, according to Radde, the powerful horns, which were formerly given as votive offerings, and which may be seen in old Swanethian churches, have ceased to exist. This animal is called tur (Capra caucasica), and is allied to the Alpine wild goat, though not identical with it. The horns are shorter, of diagonal shape, but differently formed, being, in proportion, stronger at the root, and pointing more obliquely towards the side than is the case with the Alpine relative, now apparently extinct. The mountaineers stalk them, or shoot them in battues, and the tur-shooting on Prince Dadian's property in the Letschgum district enjoys a great reputation. The game

there is driven into a ravine between the rocks, upon which the guns are placed, and must necessarily pass within shot, which naturally leads to good sport. The wild she-goat (Capra œgagrus), called by the Russians, beard-goat, 'Baradatyj Kazjol,' which roams about Little Caucasus, especially near Borshom, is totally different from the tur. The horns of the he-goat stand erect, as in the case of the European wild goat, and attain the same size, but the diagonal shape is narrower. Specimens are met with in the Grand Ducal grounds. This species of game, which is regarded by zoologists as the progenitor of our domestic goat, has become rather scarce, and is strictly preserved in the neighbourhood of Borshom. Radde supposes that the European wild goat is also to be met with in Daghestan, but he has not, as yet, succeeded in coming upon any specimens. I do not know whether chamois exist in Great Caucasus; in Little Caucasus, where they formerly were so plentiful that a small party of officers killed twenty in one day, at Bjelyj-Klutsch, not far from Tiflis, they have lately decreased in number, and the Grand Duke has them preserved with the greatest possible care. Wild sheep are said to be found on the mountain range along the Persian frontier, which is not improbable, as they abound in the Persian mountains close by. Stags and roe-deer are met with over the entire country. The former often attain a great size, for a pair of horns with sixteen antlers, which I bought at the Tiflis bazaar for two or three roubles, and the original possessor of which could only have been shot a few

years ago, weighed nearly 24 lbs. I frequently fell in with roe-deer; on the Ararat I saw a herd scampering up the rocks like chamois. Finally the hare, the humblest amongst sporting quadrupeds, is unquestionably a native of the steppes, but the enormous mass of birds of prey which inhabit those regions materially tend to its destruction. I never saw roast hare in the Caucasus."

In turning to the subject of wild-fowl, our attention is first called to the pheasant—the bird which owes its name to the River Phasis (Rion). It has ceased to be plentiful in the neighbourhood of its Colchis home, but is found in great numbers near the Kouban and the Terek. I only on one occasion saw pheasants in Kachetia. I obtained no information about the cock-of-the-wood (Tetrao urogallus), and the heath-cock (Tetrao tetrix), but I noticed their foot-prints in Armenia. Partridges and quails are abundant, and I observed on the Ararat great numbers of the red-legged partridge. Woodcocks must be numerous at the season of migration, as the Caucasus is the only outlet between the Black Sea and the Caspian, and I actually saw on the slopes above the Arax, at the foot of the Ararat, twenty-two woodcock and snipe fall to one gun within two hours. The Caucasus harbours incalculable quantities of birds of prey, from the royal eagle and the vulture down to the tiniest falcon. In driving through the steppe, the traveller is certain to see one of these birds perched upon each verst-post, and not in the least disturbed by the telega rushing by. I met the

greatest number on the high plain of Achalkalaki, and I must ask not to be accused of exaggeration, when I say that we literally passed through a row of eagles. But, notwithstanding the extensive supply of game, travellers can only count on large bags by devoting whole days together to the pursuit of sport. I should, however, mention that I know two Germans; one of whom shot a tiger at Lenkoran, and the other a wild-goat in Daghestan.

On the final day of my stay at Borshom I was made unpleasantly acquainted with the Caucasian fever. After walking in the Worontzow Park, I was suddenly seized with so extraordinary a sensation of faintness that I felt compelled to lie down. Violent pains in all my limbs, especially in the knees, ensued, and I lost all perception of heat or cold. Towards the evening I felt somewhat better, but at the Grand Duke's dinner, I was forced to play the uncomfortable part of spectator, it being almost impossible for me to swallow a morsel. The doctor recommended immediate change of air, and this advice fitted in with our plans, for our departure was already arranged for the next morning. We, however, delayed till noon, before making a start, on account of the Grand Duke, who was travelling over the same route, viâ Achaltzich, on a tour of inspection; for before that hour we should have been unable to procure horses, the road being little frequented, and provided with few relays. Our companion, already convalescent, remained behind at Borshom, where he was receiving every care and attention.

CHAPTER III.

BORSHOM TO TIFLIS.

Atzchur—Achaltzich—Chertwiss—Wardzia—Duchobortz Tribe—Achalkalaki—Country of Duchobortz Tribe—Schischtapa—Cossacks on the Frontier—Alexandrapol—The Alagöz—Drive to Ani—Ruins of Ani—Drive back—Road to Erivan—Mastara—Talyn—Village Architecture—Sardarabad—Etschmiadzin—See of the Patriarch—Situation of the Monastery—Cathedral—Stay at the Monastery—Erivan—Mosque and Fort—View of the Ararat—Excursion to the Ararat—Monastery of Chorwirab—Aralych—The Ararat—Aghurri—Gorge of Aghurri—The Kipgöl—Kurds—Aralych—Return to Erivan—Daratschitschach—The Malakans—Lake Goktscha—Valley of Akstafa—The Kura Steppe—The Red Bridge—Karajaz—Arrival at Tiflis.

THE weather was dull and rainy when we entered Borshom about noon on the 6th of September. I still felt rather exhausted after the attack of fever on the preceding day, and the dreadful jolting of the telega did not improve matters. The road ascended the Valley of the Kura to Atzchur, the second station. The scenery which, hitherto, had afforded a succession of beautiful views, extending over mountains crowned with forests, and side valleys luxuriant in vegetation, suddenly assumed a new aspect. All woodland ceased as if severed; the rugged forms of mountains became rounded off; the valley grew broader, and the surrounding heights

displayed traces of plateau formation. At this point commences the great high plain of Armenia, although, politically speaking, the adjacent tracts of land never yet belonged to Armenia. In the middle ages Grusinians, and other tribes of Kartalinian origin dwelt here, as the names of places (Achaltzich, new fortress; Achalkalaki, new town) remain to testify. At a later period these districts came under Turkish rule, and were not ceded to Russia until the peace of Adrianople. The population has adopted almost exclusively the Turkish habits and customs, and has embraced Islamism. The turban, almost universally worn by the people, is an external proof of the former dominion of the Osmanlis, for the Mahometan tribes of East Turkish (Tartar) origin, invariably wear a conical hat. Moreover, the national dress here is not the Persian coat, but the Turkish jacket. Atzchur possesses two very important buildings; a mighty castle, situated upon a rock immediately above the Kura, and the crumbling ruins of a beautiful church with an exquisitely ornamented façade. Here our troubles with postmasters commenced. At the first station a friendly word combined with a substantial *pour-boire* immediately sufficed to procure us horses; but here the postmaster ominously shook his head, observing that horses which had taken the Grand Dirke to Achaltzich could not be expected to go out again the same day. A display of firmness was requisite on our part in order to remove this prejudice; still we did not succeed in getting away until half-past four. Achaltzich is only a journey of about thirteen

miles, a distance, as a rule, easily accomplished in an hour and a half. But heavy rains had fallen lately, for the horses frequently experienced real difficulty in dragging the light telega through the deep clay soil. Thus, instead of entering Achaltzich in the afternoon, as we anticipated, we only arrived there during the night. We were received in the most charming manner by the family of Prince Ratieff (in Grusinian, Ratieschwilli) the chief of the district, the prince himself, who was in attendance on the Grand Duke, being absent. The niece of the prince, the only lady acquainted with the Russian language, did the honours. I confess that I never again saw so perfect an ideal of the beautiful Circassian type, set off by a noble and natural grace of manner. Our reception, too, was really quite brilliant, owing to preparations for illuminating the house, which had been made in anticipation of the Grand Duke passing the night there. The latter had, however, continued his journey without stopping, to Achalkalaki, and the honour of a grand illumination was bestowed upon us. A relapse of fever, which had made its appearance on the road, entirely prevented me from duly appreciating the exceedingly kind reception afforded to us, and I was soon compelled to ask permission to retire to my room,

The town of Achaltzich, situated upon a rocky terrain above the Pŏtzchowtschai, a tributary of the Kura, presents an aspect more imposing than beautiful. The surrounding mountains are barren, and by no means picturesque; whilst the yellow clay soil imparts to the

landscape a most desolate appearance. I was told, however, that Achaltzich is famous for its fruit. In the town there is nothing to be seen, if I recollect rightly, except a castle and a few churches or mosques. The place seemed to me to be in a state of sad decadence, but this impression may have resulted from my feverish condition. The environs are rich in remarkable sights. Situated at a distance of about four miles to the south-east of the town are two monasteries, Safara and Zarmza, both famed for their architecture. The former is in a good state of preservation, but the latter is in ruins. Amongst the mountains to the north-west, and connected by road with Achaltzich, lies concealed in the most lovely recess of the forest, a watering-place called Abas-Tuman, also much frequented. Its lofty elevation (4,300 feet) renders it during the hot summer months a still more agreeable residence than Borshom. From here a celebrated pass (7,300 feet) leads northwards over the mountain chain into the valley of the Rion, and thence further on to Kutais. The view of the main chain from the watershed (although seventy miles distant), is from its grandeur considered to be most wonderful. But being desirous on account of our companion not to prolong too much our excursion in Armenia, and as, moreover, we had a large supply of monasteries and churches in store for us during the next few days, we decided to forego the pleasure of visiting any of the places above mentioned, and the following morning we resumed our journey. The ladies were unfortunately not yet visible; so we begged Prince

Ratieff's assistant, a native of Berlin, who had, however, forgotten every syllable of his native tongue, and a nephew of the house, Prince Tscholochaiew, to be the channel of our best thanks. The journey was not at all enjoyable, for the road, instead of continuing along the valley, diverged in a straight line over the mountains east of the town. Nothing was gained thereby, for the time which, owing to the bends in the river, might have been lost in proceeding along the valley, was wasted here in ascending constant zigzags, whilst the deep slippery clay soil made it extremely difficult for the horses to drag us along. After again descending into the valley and crossing over the Kura by means of a bridge, certainly not destined to last for ever, engineering eccentricities again awaited us, but this time on a grander scale; for to gain about two miles of straight course, the poor horses were compelled to drag us up some 1,545 feet. The road again reached the valley near to an old ruined watch-tower, and at last continued along it. On the opposite side of the Kura we saw perched on a rock two gigantic eagles, as white as snow. It took us four hours to get over the sixteen miles before arriving at Idumala, the first station, situated below the castle of Aspinza, and the reception which we there encountered was not one calculated to afford either comfort or consolation after the tedious drive. The postmaster was—in consequence, I presume, of a Grand Ducal *pour-boire* received the preceding day—in a state of hopeless intoxication, and his Yamtchiks had improved the occasion by disappearing altogether.

It required considerable energy and much strong language to obtain even one telega. Ali fortunately found a Duchobortz with a waggon, which served to convey him and the baggage. Scarcely had we proceeded two and a half miles along the road, when the telega, catching against a stone which lay in the way, suddenly collapsed, all its component parts giving way at the same time. In the twinkling of an eye we found ourselves and our baggage scattered far and wide; fortunately, however, no one was hurt. Ali soon overhauled us, and managed to make room in his waggon; and in this manner we resumed our journey, resembling very much a party going to a fair, whilst the Yamtchik employed his time in gathering together the different portions of the telega. To me the inconvenience of this tragi-comic expedition was materially enhanced by a violent attack of dysentery, an almost inevitable result of fever.

The mountain sides, enclosing the valley, became steeper beyond Idumala, and we frequently noticed those peculiar hermit cells, which had attracted our attention on the way to Timothis-ubani. The multitude of these cavernous abodes almost suggests the impression that they must be remains belonging to a prehistoric period, when men inhabited recesses in the rocks, only accessible by ropes, in the same manner as certain Papuan tribes in New Guinea live now-a-days in the tops of high trees. At all events it seems incredible that so great a number of anachorites should have selected for their retreat this particular valley,

which does not abound in fine scenery. A charming oasis lies near the point where the Achalkalaki-tschai discharges its waters into the Kurá. It is called Chertwiss and is famous for the grand ruins of a castle, as well as the highly cultivated gardens, luxuriant with verdure, which surrounded it. We had still about an hour's drive from this spot to Nakolachewi, our night quarters. I had heard it mentioned by an experienced traveller in the East, that riding on horseback is a good remedy for dysentery; so I resolved to test for myself the efficacy of this cure, which sounds rather incredible. My determination also suited our plans, especially as the fine, mild afternoon seemed expressly adapted for an excursion to the far-famed monastery of Wardzia, situated on the rocks at a distance of about five or six miles from Nakolachewi. As there were no other horses to be obtained, we hired from a Duchobortz two young cart-horses, and, as a matter of fact, my sufferings vanished after being a few minutes in the saddle. Our intention was only to take one guide with us; but almost before we were aware of it, we found ourselves escorted by some half-dozen armed Tartars mounted on small sinewy Turkish horses. These fellows gave as a pretext for wishing to accompany us the great insecurity of the country, owing to plundering Kurds, but in reality they simply hoped to obtain a trifling *pour-boire*. They were, however, extremely polite and obliging, and appeared to enjoy themselves beyond measure. We soon reached a point in the valley, where the river is hemmed in between two projecting rocks over 500 feet

in height, on one of which is situated an old castle; here the path was not more than a foot wide. Half way up the rocky walls commenced a track, the like of which—with one exception on the Persian frontier—we never again witnessed. The nimble Tartar horses, often ascending and descending a yard at a time, clambered without any hesitation over masses of uneven rocks scattered pellmell here and there, and our well-fed cart-horses, which had probably before never had a saddle on their backs followed boldly in the rear. This induced me to come to the conclusion that stable comforts are the cause of our horses being so shy and awkward; for throughout the East, horses—very superior thoroughbreds excepted—rarely have the opportunity afforded them of a stable, yet they never hesitate, if they see before them the slightest possibility of succeeding, to try at least to accomplish whatever tasks may be required of them. In paths such as these the animal first carefully tests the stability of each stone with the forefoot, and in steep descents will, often and intentionally, poise itself firmly on its hind-quarters, whilst it feels in front with its fore-legs for a secure stepping-place. Two instances have especially impressed upon my memory the sureness and sagacity of Oriental horses. On one occasion one of our pack-horses fell over a steep incline, rendered slippery by the rain, with two pack-baskets on its back containing a load weighing over three cwts. It was impossible to get down to its assistance, the slope, which was fifty feet in depth, seeming well nigh impracticable, and we

waited up above on the path to see what the horse would do. After having recovered from its fall, the animal closely examined the incline, and then without any hesitation selected for itself a zigzag course, frequently testing the ground in front with its forefeet, and it finally climbed up to us. On the other occasion (in Persia) we had arrived at a moat, which intersected the paths, and seemed too wide to jump over. Whilst we were looking about in search of another route, up came the leading pack-horse. This animal, a grey, was very proud of its position, and would never tolerate any one of the other pack-horses to pass in front. As soon as it approached the moat, it measured the distance with its eye, and retreated some twenty paces. It then took a short run, and cleared the moat at a bound, in spite of its load. Somewhat discomfited, we leaped after it. I do not think that any European horse would have proved itself equally independent. Oriental horses possess, besides, the great merit of being very mild-tempered. Amongst nearly two hundred horses which we had occasion to use during the course of our journey, not one was ever seen to kick or bite; they were all easy to mount, and none of them possessed the defect, inherent in our cavalry horses, of endeavouring to stick close to one another's sides.

Beyond the ravine the path again descends towards the Kura, and a gallop across the meadows along the river soon brought us to the heights of Wardzia, which being situated on the left bank of the Kura, made it necessary for us to ford across. The river, some hundred

feet broad, was, owing to the dry season of the year, only knee-deep, and did not flow very rapidly. A zig-zag road in good condition then led us up to the monastery. This remarkable retreat for Troglodytes is composed of a number of cells (report says 365), hewn out of the soft rock, and which are so constructed that one cell with doorway and window lies to the front, whilst a second cell adjoining it, which is quite dark, faces the back. These cells, built of stone, are situated, although in a very irregular manner, one above the other, and are connected by means of subterraneous passages and open galleries. These galleries are generally supported by parapets hewn in the rock, which falls away very abruptly. These cells, as regards internal arrangements, contain nothing worthy of notice; the so-called refectory alone possessing stone benches and a stone table, the whole cut out of solid rock. The church of the monastery is a large room, over twenty feet in length, the roof of which is hewn out in the form of a vault. The walls have a coating of chalk, and are also decorated with Byzantine frescoes, probably dating from the twelfth century. But time and Persian invaders have played sad havoc with the interior, where, owing to the darkness which prevails, scarcely anything is to be seen. We could, however, plainly recognise the full-length portrait of Queen Tamara, the national heroine of Grusinia, and benefactress of the monastery. The adjoining chapels are also adorned with frescoes. There are no actual buildings at Wardzia; but a gallery, leading to the slope

formed by the rock, contains some elegant pillars; and, situated on a projection, there is a small and most graceful square chapel, the cupola of which has also unfortunately been much injured. According to popular belief, this spot is supposed to be the grave of Queen Tamara. The memory of this national heroine is worshipped far and wide over the entire Kartalinian districts, as far even as Swanethia. The people recognise her palace in each ruin, and her grave is exhibited at more than a thousand places. Brosset, the learned investigator of Grusinian antiquities, has established the groundlessness of most of these traditions; but, as far as I could ascertain, the last resting-place of the queen has never yet been decided upon with any accuracy, and the people may well be permitted to invest with sanctity places which to them are monuments of a former era of glory and magnificence. As we never stopped at Gori, an old town situated between Suram and Tiflis, we were unfortunately unable to pay a visit in the neighbourhood to Uphlis-Tziche, a city built on the rocks, and in many respects resembling Wardzia. But I learnt on reliable authority that Wardzia, from its situation, and still more from its interior aspect, presents greater objects of interest than Uphlis-Tziche, although the latter, on account of its proximity to the high road and the railway, is better known and more famous.

It was beginning to get dark as we left Wardzia. The only occupant of the ruins was an old hermit, probably a Tartar and hence a Mahommedan, who set our

minds at ease concerning the plundering Kurdes, of whose existence I had entertained very great doubts from the first. It is remarkable how great is the dread in which the people stand of those nomad tribes. In Armenia no authorities would allow us to proceed without an escort along the Russo-Turkish frontier; yet later on we rode by ourselves, through the whole of Turkistan, without encountering the slightest sign of hostility on the part of the natives. The moon was fortunately shining brightly as we rode back to Nakolachewi, which enabled us to pass without difficulty or danger through the ravine in the rocks. On arriving at the village I was again seized with dysentery; but on applying a remedy, the recipe of which had been given to us by a friend, the attack soon passed off. This remedy is, I believe, used in the English army in India. It proved, later on, equally successful in the case of Ali, who, liking the aromatic flavour of the medicine, used subsequently, although perfectly well, to sip it behind our backs. The recipe, which is not written according to the German pharmacopœia, but which any chemist could easily prepare by adhering to the nature and not the actual letter of the prescription, is as follows: Esprit de canelle, 210 gr.; confections aromatiques, 15 gr.; esprit d'ammoniac aromatique, 15 gr.; syrop de safran, 45 gr.; colombo, 15 gr.; bicarbonate de soude, 8 gr.; to be well shaken and a table-spoonful to be taken every two hours in a wine-glassful of water until relieved.

The post-master having really an insufficien supply

of horses, and as the post-road terminated with the next station, we hired the following morning a six-horsed waggon from a Duchobortz, whose particular district begins near Achalkalaki. The Duchobortz are a Russian sect which, in the early part of the present century, sprang up near to the Sea of Azow. I could not ascertain in what respects they differ from the orthodox Greek Church. They preserve a strict silence on the subject, and possibly themselves know very little about it. This much is clear: that they have no popes, and that when assembled for Divine worship any individual member of the community, on whom the Spirit descends, can address the congregation. Hence, probably, the name Duchobortz, or spirit-worshippers. The Government, not improbably apprehensive lest the propagation of the sect might endanger the dignity of the Russian priesthood, compelled the tribe to migrate from its original abode to these regions. Shortly after the acquisition of Turkish and Persian territories by the treaties of peace of Adrianople and of Turkmantschai, a tract of land between Achalkalaki and Alexandrapol, contiguous to the new frontier, was assigned to them. Here they settled down; but the soil not producing sufficient elements of subsistence, the greater portion have taken to the trade of carriers. They are considered to be thoroughly trustworthy, and enjoy general confidence throughout the Caucasus. Their villages are prosperous and clean. A peculiarity which immediately attracts attention is that they have borrowed from their neighbours in Russia, the German

colonists on the Molotschna, not only the dress, but the characteristic vehicle and harness. They wear jackets, trousers, and caps with a shade in front made of dark blue cloth, and in outward appearance can scarcely be distinguished from German peasants. Instead of the Troika, German harnesses are used, and substantial carts or waggons replace the abominable telega. Their horses are sturdy animals, always well fed and well cared for. They brought away with them from their original birthplace another creature of a less agreeable description. This is the Russian moth, from which their women seem to have been unable to separate themselves. When the migration took place, these insects found themselves stowed away in bandboxes, and on their arrival in the Armenian climate, which is very favourable for the production of vermin, they were not slow to increase their numbers.

It was no very arduous task for our six horses to draw us up from Nakolachewi to the plateau of Achalkalaki; for the road, which had been newly constructed and was in good condition, ascended the steep declivity by long easy curves. The stony walls swarmed in every direction with partridges. The plateau itself, 5,700 feet above the level of the sea, is as flat as a table; it is surrounded to the north-east and to the south by barren mountains, whilst to the west it breaks off abruptly into the Valley of the Kura. The double-crested Abul, the highest mountain to the eastward, does not appear very awe-inspiring, despite its elevation of 11,100 feet, for it lacks the line of perennial snow.

Owing to the beautiful clear atmosphere, as well as to the tranquillity of the Sabbath, the panorama which enfolded itself before our eyes possessed, notwithstanding its barren aspect, great attractions: the soil was well cultivated, and innumerable eagles and falcons sat perched upon each side of the road. Our Duchobortz attendants, one of whom, from his saddle, drove the three front horses, were very anxious to cut a dash, and the distance of seven miles to Achalkalaki was accomplished at nearly full gallop. Achalkalaki, situated on the Taporowantschai, which lower down takes the name Achalkalaki, is a small country town possessing no remarkable sights. It has acquired fame from the heroic defence of its citadel in the year 1828, after Achaltzich had fallen into the hands of the Russians; the Turkish commander literally held out until the last man. The Pristaw (chief of the police) had provided for our reception, and had also made arrangements enabling us to continue our journey; the latter proceeding on his part being very essential to our future progress, for no posting communications existed between Achalkalaki and Erivan. On my inquiring if travellers occasionally passed that way, he replied literally as follows: 'Oh! very often; why, it is scarcely four years since the last was here.' I only found mention made of Achalkalaki in the works of Petzholdt and Cunynghame. The latter, who was entirely unacquainted with the Russian language, persisted, as I was told by the Pristaw, in recognising Kirghiz at this spot, and would not be persuaded to abandon the idea.

The villages of the Duchobortz begin on the far side of Achalkalaki; Bogdanowka, the first of them, is twelve miles distant from the town, and some seven miles further on lies Gariellowka. The great elevation of the district renders it unsuitable for agriculture; and the chief element of prosperity consists—after their carriers' waggons—in large herds of cattle. The extensive dairy of Herr Von Kutzschenbach is situated in the vicinity of the district of the Duchobortz, in the direction of Tiflis. He is a German, who has settled down amongst Tartar tribes, and his establishment is said to be in a most thriving condition. The produce of his farm finds a market chiefly at Tiflis. I have been assured that Tartar tribes, which dwell in the neighbourhood, place most implicit confidence in his decision, and generally select him to act as arbitrator in cases of dispute arising amongst themselves: instances of a similar choice being made, as regards persons of consideration, being of frequent occurrence in the East. Petzholdt gives some description of this establishment.

At Gariellowka we met Prince Ratieff, the chief of the Achaltzich district, in whose house we had been so hospitably received. He had been in attendance on the Grand Duke as far as the limits of his district, and was awaiting the return of the latter from the manœuvres held at the camp near Dshelaloghlu. We spent the early part of the afternoon in his society, and had an opportunity of noticing the extreme cleanliness which prevails in the dwellings of the Duchobortz, and

the quiet respectable behaviour of these people. Beyond Gariellowka all cultivation of the soil ceases, and the high plain, considerably hemmed in by long lines of barren heights, would, were it not for extensive herds which lend animation to the scene, have presented a very dreary and very monotonous aspect. We also fell in with large numbers of birds of prey, and in the course of the afternoon I shot a bustard, which, nothing daunted, had allowed our vehicle to approach within thirty paces. The only variation which the landscape offered was that of occasional lakes with flat swampy banks. During the afternoon we reached a desolate ridge, 7,000 feet in height, forming the watershed between the Kura and the Arax, the ascent of which was so gradual as to be almost imperceptible. In like manner the descent on the south side was most easy, and could scarcely be felt. The nature of the landscape became, if possible, still more desolate, for stony acclivities projected on the east side, and the large herds of the Duchobortz had disappeared altogether. The watershed is equally the boundary between the districts of Achaltzich (government of Tiflis) and of Alexandrapol (government of Erivan); and, strictly speaking, Armenia commences at this point. The terribly stony ground, and the multitude of offensive vermin, made it sufficiently evident in the course of the next few days that we were travelling in that inauspicious country. Some five miles south of the pass the Turkish frontier touches the Arpatschai, and continues along its bank for a distance of more

than seventy miles, until it reaches the point where that river discharges itself into the Arax. The name Arpatschai signifies barley-brook, and would seem to indicate the extreme fertility of this tract of land in former times, but the clearing away of forest on the heights has reduced it to a very unimportant stream, and there is but little fertile land to be seen. It is invested to a certain extent with historical interest by the circumstance that Xenophon, at the head of the ten thousand, erroneously believing this river to be the Phasis, marched his troops along its bank for a certain distance. The Cossack post, Schischtapa, or, as we generally heard it pronounced, Schischtapur, was situated on the far side of the stream at the frontier above mentioned, and opposite to us was the Turkish guard-house. Like our own guard-houses the latter was a one-storied building with a flat roof, and a very plain exterior. The officer in command of the post was away on duty, and the vermin of the place immediately sought compensation for his absence at the expense of our persons. Never did I spend such a night! As for the Cossacks, they slept on the roof, wrapped up in their burkas, and were consequently less tormented.

The line of frontier which separated the Caucasus from Turkey, and from Persia, is guarded by a cordon of Cossack-posts, stationed at distances of between five to ten miles from one another. The force employed at these posts varies from ten to thirty men, according to the position; the larger posts are commanded by an officer, and the smaller ones by a non-commissioned

officer, who, amongst Cossack troops, is styled Urjadnik, a title not in use in other corps. Their service consists in patrolling the country in search of smugglers and robbers, a very arduous duty to perform during winter amongst mountainous districts. The regiments of the Terek and Kouban Cossacks supply respectively a fixed proportion of men for this service, selected, as I was informed, from the age of twenty-five to thirty, and between the fifth and tenth years of service. This accounts for the circumstance that a traveller proceeding along the frontier is continually falling in with troops belonging to different regiments. This incident is not made apparent by any variety of uniforms, for Cossacks only put on their regimental costume on great occasions; for ordinary use they wear their own clothes, which, as regards cut, are not unlike the uniform, but which, as regards colour and embroidery, vary according to individual taste. A dark greyish-brown material seemed to be most generally worn. The Tscherkesska and the Papach compose the uniform for grand service, the Terek regiments having blue, and the Kouban regiments red, collars. The armament consists of musket, pistols, kindshal, and schaschka. The Caucasian Cossack does not carry a lance; moreover, all these arms, together with the horse, are the property of the individual, and no general standard is prescribed. Each Cossack post is constructed on the same principle: a one-storied building, with stabling, room for the officer in command, larder, and kitchen; there are, as a rule, no rooms for the men to sleep in,

as in summer time they lie down on the roof, and during winter in the warm stable. The sentry stands on the roof, and in districts—as, for instance, in the Tschetschnia—where thickets impede the free survey, a wooden watch-tower, resembling a huge dove-cot, is erected near the post.

Opinions differ very much in respect to the Cossacks of the Caucasus. By some persons they are extolled to the skies; whilst others, adopting the more prosaic view of late years, will scarcely admit that they possess a redeeming quality. Judging from what I heard and saw, I believe that in former times they were deserving of all the praise which has been so lavishly bestowed upon them. But the conflicts with mountain tribes, from which the Cossacks derived their chief experience of fighting, have ceased; and as they are no longer obliged, by day and by night, to watch over and defend from attack their stanitzs (strongholds) on the Terek and on the Kouban, their warlike propensities have declined, and the young men now found serving under the standard differ but little from other Russian peace-soldiers. A complete reorganization of the two Bans of Cossacks in the Caucasus must necessarily take place sooner or later; such a re-organization is now being completed in regard to the Cossacks of the Don, whose stanitzs—ancient fortresses—will then become nothing more than villages surrounded by walls. The service which they perform on the frontier is very valuable, and is conducted at but little cost to the State; for every Cossack, in return for the land allotted to him by the crown, is bound to

perform military service, and is compelled to keep a horse, receiving very insignificant pay. A drawback to this system is that the horses being nourished as cheaply as possible, are in a very reduced condition, and can bear no comparison with the well-kept Tartar horses. It has happened to us on more than one occasion that Cossack horses, which had been assigned to us, were found to be scarcely able to sustain their own weight without the additional encumbrance of ourselves, and which, after trotting for a few minutes, would abruptly desist from further exertion. I also noticed, several times, a certain flabbiness about Cossack youths, who are indolent, morose, and very unskilful. The abominable state of dirt, which prevailed at the post-houses and amongst horses and men, contrasted very unfavourably with the model cleanliness displayed by the Turkish frontier soldiery.

Our stay at Schischtapa was not in any way delightful. The vermin at night would not let me close my eyes, and our food—Cossack fare being of too meagre a description—consisted solely of the bustard shot on the way, the original toughness of which had been to some extent removed by skilful culinary manipulation. In respect to the short distance which separates Alexandrapol from Schischtapa, it can only be said that the country around was barren and desolate, the road stony, and the heat oppressive, notwithstanding the considerable elevation of the plateau. At noon we had already reached the town, and found to our surprise a small hotel, tolerably clean, and kept by an honest Swabian,

Herr Gross from Wurtemberg. A few hours siesta followed by a good dinner, with excellent Erivan grapes for dessert, compensated in some measure for the sleepless night and the heat. Alexandrapol, the sights of which we visited during the afternoon, belonged, until the Peace of Adrianople, to Turkey, and bore the name of Gümri. It is situated, at an elevation of 5,230 feet, near to the river Arpatschai, which forms the frontier. Its importance lies chiefly in a fortress erected by the Russians as a counterpart to Kars, distant forty-two miles, and which, according to European ideas, is regarded as a fortification of some strength, but according to Oriental notions is quite impregnable. The town is not particularly remarkable, yet it possesses some stately Armenian churches. The most recent, which at the time of our visit had not been completed, was most tastefully constructed in the Armenian style, and a system of decoration had been resorted to which frequently occurs in Armenian architecture, and which consists in introducing into the building a varicoloured element of red, black and grey stones. A good view is obtained from some churchyards, situated close to the town on the low ridge of a hill; this point overlooked the wide and barren expanse of high table-land surrounded by dreary and desolate mountain ranges. Few trees were to be seen in the town. Mount Alagöz, lying to the south-eastward, had been connected in my imagination with a more imposing spectacle; I had heard it so frequently mentioned as the neighbour and rival of the lofty Ararat, that remembering the elevation of

the former to be 13,400 feet, I had depicted to myself a magnificent snow-capped cone. In feality it was an ugly, ungraceful mountain, with long continuous slope, and its celebrated seven peaks were merely abrupt points covered here and there with a streak of snow. Its real Armenian name is Aragadz, and the Turkish Alagöz (Grey Eye) is only a corruption of it. Apart from the view, there was not much to be seen in the churchyard save a multitude of crosses upon tombs with inscriptions in the Armenian Cursive characters: they were of good workmanship, and displayed the grotesque flourishes of the Armenian style. These Cursive characters are as little adapted for monumental inscriptions as the Grusinian Mchedruli, whilst the old Armenian lapidary writing—notwithstanding its heaviness, or possibly on account of it—looks very imposing when engraved on stone. On our return to the hotel we hired one of the excellent conveyances of the town for our excursion to Ani; and not being disposed to incur the inconvenience of doubtful night-quarters in a Turkish village, we came to a distinct agreement with the driver that we were to be taken there and brought back again the same day. The Pristaw, who conducted the negociations, promised to send with us one of his policemen to serve as escort and interpreter, and he also gave notice to the Turkish and Russian frontier-authorities of our intended expedition. The night was again destined to be a restless one, for the élite of Alexandrapol played billiards in an adjoining room, until four in the morning.

Ten years ago the trip to Ani was still a perilous undertaking. For the sake of security travellers were obliged to ride along Russian territory, until they came to a Cossack post, situated opposite the ruins; thence they were attended by a strong escort to guard against surprise, which enabled them, after crossing the Arpatschai, to visit the city of ruins. At the present time the road is so entirely free from danger that they may without hesitation perform, as we did, the entire distance over Turkish territory. It is true that no road exists, but the sterile soil is as firm as a macadamised street, and the heights to be crossed are unimportant. After several days rain both the Arpatschai and its tributary the Karstchai are no longer fordable for carriages, and the soaked condition of the ground is of itself sufficient to render any tour impracticable. Those who are desirous to pass a night in the neighbourhood of Ani may safely count on being hospitably received at the Armenian monastery of Kotschewank, only a few versts distant. The escort serves principally to attend upon travellers during the journey; for as regards security, one European gun, conspicuously displayed, would be equally effective. The mediation of the Pristaw seemed to have inspired the Armenian driver with awe, for punctually at the first dawn of day he was on the spot with a comfortable conveyance, drawn by four horses abreast. The Pristaw was obliging enough to accompany us across the Arpatschai, which was quite shallow, to the Turkish frontier on the far side, where he introduced us to the

officer in command, who at the sight of my Imperial firman, a document a yard long, became politeness itself. The latter gave us as an escort two very elegant-looking, active, well-mounted Turkish soldiers; so that, including our policeman, we were under the protection of three armed men. The policeman, an Armenian, who spoke both Russian and Turkish fluently, was also well mounted, and he certainly was the handiest man of his kind that I fell in with during the journey; for, in general, we had to experience considerable inconvenience from the clumsiness of policemen sent to escort us. The first portion of the twenty-seven miles of road was not picturesque, but the beautiful fresh weather, combined with the agreeable sensation of treading for the first time upon Turkish soil, and at a spot too where for some time to come the swarm of Oriental travellers will not make its appearance, tended materially to raise our spirits; and our two Turkish soldiers vied with the policeman in executing small feats of horsemanship. The country round about did not seem sterile, for the villages were both extensive and numerous, although in outward appearance they were not inviting. We followed the course of the Arpatschai as far as Basch-Schuregel (chief place in the district of Schuregel), where the unshapely and ponderous ruins of a castle seemed to indicate the vicinity of the ancient regal city of Armenia. A few versts further on near the village of Akïzüm (White Grape)—where, certainly nothing more remains of vino-culture—we crossed the Karstchai, which seemed to me a more im-

portant stream than the Arpatschai, and afterwards the Mawrektschai, near Kamir-Bank, wherestands the crumbling castle of Mawrek. Up to this point the soil was in a fair state of cultivation, and the roads were well frequented, but here the dreary Armenian wilderness again commenced; in front of us were barren cliffs, some twenty miles to our right yellow mountains, at the base of which Kars is situated, and to our left the ugly Alagöz. As yet nothing was visible of the Ararat, and we almost despaired of ever getting the promised view of this far-famed mountain, when, on reaching a gentle ridge extending between two hills some 200 feet in height (near Kara-Kala in the Five Verst Map), a panorama disclosed itself to our gaze, which for wild and desolate grandeur is perhaps unparalleled. Before us lay extended a rocky plain about five miles in length, and at its further extremity was a mighty city, surrounded by walls with towers, churches and palaces —a noble pile, but devoid of animation. In the background the rugged peaks of wild-looking mountains, dividing the valleys of the Arax and of the Eastern Euphrates (Murad), rose into the air. From the midst of these, and beyond the salt mines of Külpi, a steep cone started up, and far away to the south-east, at a distance of seventy miles, the snowy crest of the Ararat towered majestically above the intervening mountains. The associations aroused by this scene were enhanced a thousand-fold by the tranquillity and desolation which prevailed; for in days gone by the capital of a mighty empire had stood on this very spot

in full glory and magnificence; and so intense was the impression occasioned by this solitude amongst ruins, that, even later on at Babylon and at Palmyra, I did not experience so acute a sensation. The last five miles were soon got over; and when we reached the small Turkish watch-post, situated not far from the ruins, the guard, consisting of six men, turned out in honour of our arrival, presenting arms. But in the excitement of the moment the sergeant forgot to give the order to shoulder arms, and the men, after having received our thanks, marched back to the guard-room, still presenting arms. We followed, and remained a short time in the guard-room, which was a model of cleanliness. After clearly intimating to the driver the necessity of returning the same evening, we commenced our ramble amongst the ruins. The entire guard—five, active well-clad men—accompanied us, partly in order to carry our provisions and partly induced by curiosity. We entered the imposing city of ruins through a hole in the wall, and were sufficiently matter-of-fact to indulge in a breakfast *al fresco* under the shade of the cathedral, the grandest of the edifices. The Turkish soldiers, being Sunnites, had no scruples in partaking of our provisions, and they gave us in return a delicious melon. This is one of the characteristic features which clearly define the two sects of Islamism; the Sunnite is not deterred by his religious tenets from eating with a Christian, but the Shee-ite reluctantly takes part in a meal in company with an unbeliever, and, although possessing a natural inclination to hospitality,

he is sufficiently fanatical to break in pieces the plates on which a Christian has been served, or at least to have them consecrated anew by the priest. I noticed no exception to this rule amongst the Shee-ites. The Turkish soldiers, although they accepted the food which we offered to them, refrained from eating it in the company of the Armenian, with whom nevertheless they appeared to be on excellent terms; they retired by themselves to a corner of the church.

Ani presents so many points of interest, that I will only give a general summary of what I saw. Those who are desirous to go deeper into the subject should consult Ritter's Geography, Section x., page 439. The monography respecting Ani, written by a living author, Professor Obich, is perhaps the best authority for this portion of Armenia, and especially for the Ararat. Photographs of the ruins do not, unfortunately, exist; but Westley, the photographer at Tiflis, informed me that on the occasion of his next tour through these regions he intended, if possible, to call at Ani. As regards the foundation of the city, nothing is positively known. Its era of splendour commenced in the year 961, when under Aschod III. it first became the residence of the kings of Armenia, who belonged to the race of the Bagratides, and from that period the town continued to flourish until 1045. The magnificent edifices which formerly existed, and of which he ruins are a record, were constructed at an epoch when Ani was the centre of a powerful kingdom comprising more than 100,000 inhabitants. Subsequent to the year

1045, at which date the city was betrayed into the hands of the Byzantine Emperor, it served as an apple of discord during the successive wars which were waged between Byzanz, the Grusinian rulers, and the Sultans of the Seldschuks; the latter of whom, during the period of their domination, erected mosques side by side with the churches. In the year 1319 the town was completely destroyed by an earthquake, which reduced it to ruins, and since that time Ani has lain desolate, no living soul dwelling within its walls.

The city, which commands a very strong position, is built in the form of a triangle. To the south-east the rocks descend some hundred feet perpendicularly in the direction of the Arpatschai, and rise with equal abruptness on the far side, the apex of which is surmounted by the plain unimposing guard-house of the Cossack post. To the west extends a precipice of about equal depth, but the bed of the ravine below is dry. A double range of walls, of prodigious size, facing the high-plain to the north-east, protected the city from outward invasion. At a point near the southern angle of the city, where the gorge enters the valley of the Arpatschai, the terrain rises some hundred feet, and on this spot the citadel, which may still be recognised by the massive mural substructures which divide it from the rest of the town, was most probably situated. These remains were, curiously enough, overlooked by the traveller Hamilton, who in consequence (Ritter, page 446) contests the ancient existence of an acropolis. Remnants of two unim-

portant churches, still standing erect, are apparent on the citadel, from which eminence a good survey may be had of the City of Ruins. One of these churches contains a pillar with a very curious capital, representing an eagle holding a lamb in its claws; but the same device may occasionally be met with in some of the other churches. Although the houses in the lower portion of the town were swept away by the earthquake like chaff before a whirlwind, their ground-lines and the direction of the streets may still be traced amongst the vestiges which remain. The churches, mosques and outward walls, have withstood the power of the elements, and some parts of them are as fresh-looking as if they were only completed yesterday. A feature, which is common to all the edifices, consists in a combination, carried out with great taste, of three different kinds of stone: one dark grey, one brick-red, and one yellowish grey. The material appeared to be a species of Tufa; but, as I do not possess geognostical knowledge, this statement is made with reservation. Rising close to the citadel, on the very edge of the Arpatschai abyss, lies a mosque with a slender octagonal minaret of some height. Though but a small construction, it is still a very picturesque building, from its graceful appearance and elevated position. The next edifice, the cathedral, is also situated close to the precipice, and is, including the dome, still in good preservation. The base represents a Latin cross, but details of style have been borrowed from Byzantine models. The pleasing impression which it creates is

due less to grandeur of effect and richness of ornamentation than to the noble and well-proportioned outlines. The new church at Alexandrapol, to which I have recently alluded, is a very happy reproduction of the same style of architecture. The cathedral is not rich in ornamentation; and, generally speaking, as regards the decoration of outward surfaces, these edifices cannot—so far as beauty is concerned, allowance being made for the tasteful polychromatics displayed in the materials—compare in the slightest degree with the examples, which I have myself witnessed, of Grusinian ruins. The cross, which forms so characteristic a feature in Grusinian churches, is here so completely overcharged and distorted by complicated flourishes, that the main object held in view sinks into insignificance. Some of these relievo-crosses were positively monstrous. The absence of rich outward decoration is to some extent redeemed by means of innumerable inscriptions in the old Armenian language, which were copied and deciphered by Brosset, and which principally refer to the history of the city.

At the north-east corner of the city, where the walls overhang the Arpatschai, stands the most remarkable structure—a circular church built in the form of the Baptistery at Pisa. Frescoes pointing to the best period of Byzantine art may still clearly be recognised here. The other churches and chapels, which lie scattered about in different directions, are of no very considerable size, and some parts of them are not so well preserved as the cathedral. Still they offer an abundance of interesting details. A little chapel, for

instance, situated near the city walls, contains a ceiling in mosaics, interspersed with stalactite vaults, the whole most graceful in design and perfect in execution. A church close by possesses a Byzantine basso-relievo, which would well repay the transport to some museum in Europe. The subject is the Annunciation, and the Virgin Mary is represented sitting on a stool, which in view of Oriental ideas is a very remarkable design. In another small church, situated near the citadel, and on the brink of the western abyss, the lateral chapels are divided from the nave by galleries, the pillars of which attract notice on account of their capitals. They were originally Ionic capitals, but a third volute had been introduced between the two others with a view to impart a massive appearance to the capitals and to bring them into harmony with the heavy character of the whole. The palace is situated at the west corner, and overhangs the abyss; the greater portion is destroyed, but the ponderous fragments of the walls prove that it must have been a mighty structure. The gateway possesses a beautiful frame of relievo-arabesques, divided into cassettes; but impelled by a savage lust for destruction, the surrounding tribes have unfortunately —as far as the hand could reach—annihilated this delicate tracery, which recalls to mind the Alhambra. Amidst this field of ruins, and almost precisely in the centre of it, the circular minaret of a ruined mosque rises about a hundred feet in height. The spiral staircase in the interior is sufficiently preserved to admit of an ascent being made; and this, accordingly, we ac-

complished; but the crumbling condition of the stones renders it very unadvisable to step out upon the roof. The walls which protect the northern portion of the city are of gigantic dimensions, and the masonry is still in good condition. They run in a double row, at an interval of about ten paces, and are intersected by three double gateways, the outer one of which stands at some distance to the side of the inner one. A large basso-relievo representing a lion courant, probably the arms of the city or those of its rulers, has been inserted into the inner wall above the western gate. The towers, which flank the walls at regular intervals, contain spacious receptacles for the defenders.

As we had arrived early in the forenoon, we had ample leisure until 3 P.M. to visit the ruins. After rambling amongst them, we descended into the western abyss by rather a dangerous path. The walls of this abyss were covered with Troglodytes' cells, which may possibly have sheltered as large a population as the city itself contained. Some of the principal caverns were occupied by nomad shepherds and their herds; they were wild-looking fellows, and it would be very unadvisable to meet them unarmed. On our return to the guard-house, the driver, as I had foreseen all along, refused to proceed back again the same day, giving as his excuse the extraordinary pretext that he had not yet fed his horses. We insisted, however, on the agreement being carried out, and, by the time the horses were sufficiently fed, were ready for a start. I had, meanwhile, taken a survey of the Turkish guard-

house. It comprised two rooms only—the actual guard-room, which contained the men's arms and equipment, and the sleeping room provided with the necessary broad wooden bed. Everything was remarkably clean, including the uniforms of the men, which were very attractive, and consist of a simple blue Zouave costume with fez. They had received new guns some few weeks before: breech-loading carbines, apparently of American manufacture. A lithographed instruction in Turkish explained the use of these weapons. Whenever I have fallen in with Turkish soldiers, I have invariably been favourably impressed by their pleasant manners and readiness to oblige; and a portion only of these qualities which are displayed by the Turk, who stands in such bad odour with us, would prove highly beneficial to our middle and lower classes.

About 5 P.M. we set out on our return journey. I now had an opportunity afforded me for the first time in these Southern regions to appreciate the advantages derived from a Petersburg padded cloak; for the evening wind, which blew across the high plain, was icy cold. Everything went well as far as the Karstschai; but during the second half of the journey one of the horses, a chestnut, who on coming had exhibited symptoms of staggers, began to tire considerably. As a drive of fifty-four miles over a good road and with a light carriage could hardly be considered as excessive exertion for four horses, we arrived at the conclusion that the animal must be ill; and the driver had only himself to thank if finally he was obliged to unharness

the chestnut, and leave it to its fate with a bag of barley tied round its neck. The Armenian and his steed gave proofs of greater endurance; for only after having accomplished the entire distance of fifty-four miles did he confess that his saddle was somewhat out of order and had galled him considerably on the way, and he apologised on that account for not having ridden the whole time close to our carriage, as it was his duty to do. The Turkish soldiers had changed horses several times on the road. When we reached the Turkish frontier-post opposite the town, it was already half-past ten. In spite of the darkness, the cold, and the stormy weather, the Turkish officer, clad in the lightest of night apparel, with which the breezes sported merrily, insisted on coming out to congratulate us on our safe return. He was himself in high spirits, for he had just received the news of his transfer to Erzeroum, which represented in his eyes a great and enjoyable city; nor would he be induced to retire until a gust of wind had carried away his fez. Half-an-hour later we were indulging in a well-earned repose at the Hotel Gross.

We had the choice of two routes between Alexandrapol and Erivan; the post-road which passes Delidshan and the direct road, which goes by Sardarabad. The former tour was the longest by at least forty-seven miles, and had the additional disadvantage of obliging us to pass twice over the same ground; as, under any circumstances, we had to go from Delidshan to Etchmiadzin viâ Erivan. The road viâ Sardarabad still re-

tains the appellation of Imperial road (Tzarskaja daroga): for the Emperor Nicholas once travelled over it on the occasion of his tour of inspection through the annexed territories. It is in fearful disorder, having never been repaired since the visit of the Czar; and I recommend all travellers who may select this route, which at any rate is an interesting one on account of Talyn and Sardarabad, to perform the journey on horseback. As we were ignorant of the bad condition of the road, we hired a large waggon with a hood, drawn by four strong-looking horses, apparently not over-fed, and conducted by an Armenian driver, who did not inspire us with much confidence. The Pristaw showed his care and attention by giving us a policeman as escort; but we soon found the latter useless, and sent him back again. Before leaving Alexandrapol about noon on September 11th, we made the acquaintance of an Austrian journeyman, who came from Arabia, and had succeeded in begging his way through to this place. He was far better acquainted with the distances between Moussoul, Diabekir, Aleppo and Bagdad, than we could possibly have imagined, and gave us some really very useful information. Our road led southward across barren and dreary regions, which were covered over, however, by a multitude of small dusky villages, and finally brought us to Boghazkessan, at the foot of the Alagöz. The name of this village, which signifies cut-throat, is scarcely exhilarating. Here the driver was anxious to pass the night, although we had not gone more than eighteen miles. He alluded significantly to

the danger of falling in with plundering Kurds, but this bugbear had altogether ceased to terrify us. We ended by carrying our point; but, as a matter-of-fact, the next stage was anything but a pleasant one. The road, which slowly ascended a ramification of the Alagöz, which we had to traverse, was in a condition defying description; and, but for the substantial construction of the waggon, we might possibly have never reached a place of shelter. The crowning point of our difficulties was the descent into the little valley in which lay Mastara, our night quarters. During this latter portion of the route we felt as though we were being driven down a stone staircase. In consequence of the nature of the track, caravans consisting of beasts of burthen laden with merchandise were all we met on the way. In Armenia the ox is employed equally with the horse for the transport of goods: a custom which, to my knowledge, does not exist either in Western Asia or in Persia. Large teams of oxen might be seen moving along this very road, chiefly carrying rock-salt from Külpi, which is situated in the valley of the Arax, close to the Turkish frontier and fifty-six miles south of Alexandrapol. Two blocks of rock-salt, each weighing above 1½ cwt., are attached to the two sides of the wooden pack-saddle, no precautions being, however, taken to protect them against damp. From time immemorial the Caucasus and Armenia have been provided with salt from the mines of Külpi, and the supply is said to be inexhaustible. In Mastara we took up our quarters for the night at the house of a tax-gatherer, who never recollected having seen

a European pass through the place. At our arrival his dog became almost frantic with delight. It was a big shaggy Bernardine, and seemed never to get over its extreme pleasure at the sight of people in the European dress. As a rule Tartar dogs bark at all Europeans, and will watch a fair opportunity to fly at their legs; whereas dogs belonging to Cossacks and to Russian officers are not naturally aggressive. The tax-gatherer lived in Mastara alone with his dog from one year's end to the other; and very bitterly did he complain of the wretched state of the country, the vile nature of the Tartar race, and the insignificancy of the pay.

The road being scarcely better on the following day, we preferred leaving the waggon to follow behind, whilst we walked on in advance. Unfortunately we forgot to take our guns with us, and thereby lost the chance of a good shot, for not far from Mastara a large wolf crossed the road, within fifteen paces, without apparently heeding us in the least. Some four miles south of Mastara the extensive ruins of Talyn commenced, which Ritter identifies with the ancient regal city of Pakaran. Above a mile to the eastward of the road stood a lofty church, resembling the cathedral of Ani, and surrounded by fragments of other buildings. Had we been on horseback we might easily have visited this place; but unfortunately we were tied down to our waggon, which kept coming up at a painfully slow pace, the four horses panting for breath. A few versts further on we came upon the ruins of a large palace, situated along the road; it is wrongly designated in the Five Verst Map

as a caravansarai. It contained some long low halls in good preservation, with arches shaped like the interior of a hollow cylinder. The present village of Talyn, which we reached soon afterwards, is surrounded by a high wall fifty feet in height, and crowned with battlements apparently of Saracenic origin, and it possesses a well-preserved citadel of the ancient Armenian period. A small church, lying close at hand, is, however, almost entirely destroyed. We here enjoyed the hospitality of a descendant of the once powerful Khans of Talyn. Since the annexation of the district, the family had evidently become impoverished; for our host lived in a condition but little removed from that of a peasant, and a few good carpets, together with some other articles, were the sole vestiges of former prosperity.

In these countries, as well as in Persia, the same description applies alike to all villages. I know no district where villages are so entirely devoid of individuality. The houses are roughly put together with stones and clay, and are almost always one-storied, with flat roofs. Wood being too expensive, the ceilings are constructed of stems of willows and of similar materials, resulting in a want of durability for the whole, and in the entire ruin, within a year's time, of any house left untenanted. The outer surface of the roof is covered over with a species of cement concocted out of sand, earth, ashes, and manure, which is said to be water-tight, but requires constant renewing. The roof is quite as much a dwelling-place for the occupant of the house as the interior of the building; and

wherever a village has been constructed on the edge of a mountain, the roof of the lower dwelling serves both as street and ante-chamber for the one situated above it.

The streets are narrow, angular, and dirty; and the sole desire of any traveller entering a village is to make his way to the far end with all possible despatch. A strange system of decoration arises from the scarcity of wood, and the consequent use of manure for burning material. The walls are lined with cakes, of the size of plates, composed of a mixture of fresh manure and chopped straw; and no sooner are these cakes sufficiently dried by the sun than they are piled up pyramid-fashion on the roof, and the walls receive a fresh garniture. I cannot say that food prepared upon manure fuel has any disagreeable smell or flavour. This fuel possesses the property, not to be undervalued for a travelling-cuisine, of igniting with great facility, and of dissolving, after speedy combustion, into glowing ashes very convenient for heating water. The chopped straw employed in the manufacture of these manure cakes is produced by the singular process of thrashing which prevails in this country. A flat wooden grinder, the lower extremity of which has stones wedged into it, passes over the ears of corn, which are piled up upon the floor, until the sharp edges of the stones have cut the straw into chaff. The grain, which from its weight falls upon the floor, is then separated by means of a winnow. Petzholdt gives a detailed description in his work of this particular instrument, and also of other agricultural implements. The national

dress, worn alike here by Tartars and Armenians, both of which races dwell intermixed with one another, is of Persian cut; but the fashionable colours are especially bright blue and red, whereas in Persia, amongst the peasants, the men are generally clad from head to foot in a suit of yellow-brown, whilst the women are attired in a costume of grey-blue.

A rocky wilderness, totally uninhabited, eighteen miles in length and twenty-eight miles in width stretches from Talyn to Sardarabad. The Arabian Desert between Babylon and Palmyra presents a less desolate aspect, for it is at least covered with briars and brambles. The only compensation, which we had for this dreary drive was the view of Mount Ararat, which towered more and more above the surrounding mountains. When finally we reached Sardarabad, the level valley of the Arax alone separated us from it, and, notwithstanding the distance of thirty-three miles, it appeared quite close to us. Although for several hours we had already sighted Sardarabad with its lofty battlements, a fine sand, which covered the latter portion of the road, impeded our progress, and prevented us from arriving there before five o'clock in the afternoon. On approaching the spot, the grand picturesque effect passed away to be replaced by a very prosaic reality; the walls were of clay, and were rapidly falling asunder. The village, though extensive, was not better than any which we had previously seen. It possessed, however, at its eastern extremity, one very beautiful spot: A limpid streamlet, oozing from a well,

bubbled along through a well cultivated garden of fruit-trees. On the one side we had the view towards the Ararat and the mountain chain, which runs to the westward of the former, along the Arax; and on the other side lay before us the yellow walls of the village, in the shade of which caravans of camels were encamped, and behind us were the dreary slopes of the Alagöz. We bought here some splendid fruits, and afforded the village population the opportunity of a good stare, although the curiosity of the natives is at first most irritating to the traveller. The numerous maidens who came to fill their pitchers at the well were all strictly veiled; but they contrived by an adroit manipulation of the veil to show that they were not the ugliest of womankind. We soon perceived that we were not very far distant from Persia, for a beggar, with chains round his neck and about his arms, approached us soliciting a contribution towards the release of his brother, who had been kidnapped by the Turkomans and dragged away captive from Khorassan to Khiva. These beggars are of daily occurrence in Persia; and here it certainly aroused our suspicion to find ourselves beset by a succession of similar mendicants wearing the same chains, and each pretending to have a brother carried away in slavery to Khiva. After the horses had been fed and rested, and after an ineffectual attempt on my part to manœuvre one of the above-described threshing-machines—which proceeding ended in my being run away with by the oxen, and in my being subsequently pitched into the

chaff to the great delight of the bystanders—we made a fresh start in order to arrive, if possible, on the same day, at Etschmiadzin. Although the road was in good condition, we did not manage to get farther than the watch-post Karasou, situated half way between Sardarabad and Etschmiadzin, where in the stables of the Tartar Tchapars (police militia)—who were very obliging—we found a shelter for the night at least destitute of vermin.

We soon accomplished the short distance to Etschmiadzin. It was still early in the morning when we stopped at the gate of the famous monastery, which, as regards exterior, far more resembles a fortress than a place devoted to Divine service. On announcing ourselves, we were immediately shown with the greatest politeness to a monk's cell. The monk, however, only spoke Turkish and Armenian: but through Ali, who served as interpreter, he begged us to wait a few minutes until the rooms which were destined for us could be got ready. Our amazement may be conceived on finding hung up against the walls of the cell woodcuts representing the emperor of Germany and the battle of Sedan. They were extracts from an English illustrated newspaper; but we could not ascertain how they ever got there. The archimandrite, Kework Sureniauz, appeared after an interval, and introduced himself. The patriarch Kework being absent at a summer residence, he had been appointed to act as deputy, and to do the honours of the monastery during our stay. We were soon shown to our rooms, which

were situated in a newly constructed wing of the building, and were furnished entirely in the European style. Amongst other articles they contained two good beds, an unknown occurrence to us since Borshom, and a most agreeable surprise. In the course of that day and during the following morning the archimandrite most obligingly pointed out and explained the different objects of interest in the monastery. He had studied at Tiflis, and spoke Russian fluently, and had also acquired a smattering of French and German; but, as a rule, the knowledge of languages possessed by monks in these parts is limited to Turkish and Armenian. He was a man of research, and for several years had been engaged in writing for the National Schools of Armenia abridged compendiums of the modern sciences, including history and geography, subjects of which the youth of the country had been formerly ignorant. He deeply deplored the neglected state of school education, which had kept in the background the Armenian population, highly gifted as regards intellect; and he frankly acknowledged the meritorious and successful labours in the field of science of the Mechitarists near Venice, although he was compelled to condemn them as papal schismatics. Unfortunately the archimandrite was not a connoisseur of art, and thus to my regret, was unable to give us any information on many interesting points, especially on the different periods of the architecture of the country.

The monastery of Etschmiadzin is the residence of

the Armenian patriarch. He is acknowledged as head of the church by about four millions of Gregorian Armenians on Turkish soil, by about one million in Russia, and by numerous adherents scattered throughout Persia, India, and Europe. His power is somewhat analogous to the Papal supremacy; but it is exercised more in an administrative manner; and he keeps altogether aloof from innovations in the domain of dogmas. The patriarch is surrounded by a number of archbishops, bishops, and clergy, who occasionally reside at the see, and are constantly being deputed to superintend the spiritual functions in different dioceses, so that a frequent intercourse is kept up between the parishes and the central authority. The church stands on the best footing with the Russian Government, and in the event of any change taking place either as regards the throne or the see, the patriarchal rights are confirmed by an imperial ukase. The duties of the clergy residing at Etschmiadzin consist chiefly in the administration of all matters, spiritual and temporal, incumbent on the patriarchate; and in the temporal affairs is included the whole of the church property, which is of some importance. Activity in the purely spiritual concerns scarcely exists, abstraction being made of the daily masses and ecclesiastical exercises. Hence the stagnancy prevailing in the spiritual domain as compared with the efficacious exertions of the Mechitarists. The rules of the monastery are not very severe; and with the exception of the simplicity observed in the

mode of living, everyone may do as he pleases. The prescribed dress is the garb of the Armenian monk—the most dignified which I have ever seen. It consists of a black gown similar to that worn by our Protestant clergy, and of a black cap, of which the portion encircling the forehead is about four inches in height, and terminates in a conical point. A black moire veil is attached to the cap, and falls down over the back as far as the elbows. The body of the cap was formerly made of pasteboard; but fashion has changed this material to whalebone, which is a far pleasanter substance during the heat of summer.

The district around the monastery is one of the most fertile in Armenia, and is richly watered by streams flowing from the north-eastern base of the Alagöz and by numerous canals communicating with the Arax. The monastery, together with two other small but independent churches (hence the Turkish name, Uetschkilissa, 'three churches') is situated close to the populous and much-frequented hamlet, Vagharschapat. A large stone reservoir, erected by the patriarch Narses, supplies abundance of water, whilst a grove with poplars and fruit-trees, planted by him, and the only one for some distance around, provides cool and refreshing walks. The site of the monastery was, according to the legend, assigned by Christ himself to Gregorius Illuminator. The name Etschmiadzin has reference to this; for it signifies, 'the only begotten One came down from on high.' The walls, which still have the appearance of being fortified, an indispensable precau-

tion in former times on account of the feuds raging in the country, enclose a large complex of habitations and farm-buildings. In the centre rises the cathedral, the construction of which has lasted during many centuries, and which, taken as a whole, does not produce a very favourable impression. The main body of the church seemed to me to date from the eighth century. Its form is that of a Greek cross with somewhat prolonged fore-nave; but subsequent additions have much defaced the original character. It had even been thought necessary in the last century to paint the inner walls of the church in the Persian landscape style with poplars and garlands. Amongst old curiosities worthy of notice there are many interesting objects, which to look at are almost magnificent, but regarded as works of art are valueless. Two tabernacles with octagon-painted roofs resting upon four pilasters, which have been erected in the apse of the transept, deserve the highest praise. They date from the earliest age of the church, and combine great and massive dignity, somewhat archaistic, with perfect execution. There stands in the courtyard close to the church, a stone with cuneiform inscription; it was found not long ago, amongst the ruins of the ancient residence Armavir, which existed previous to the Artaxata of Hannibal. Armavir lies in the vicinity of Sarderabad, and to our right we saw the remains of it from the road. The archimandrite assured us that the inscription was in old Persian; but the absence of the oblique arrow-headed character, the specific sign which marks the

divisions of words, convinced me that such was not the case. Professor Mordtmann is said to have deciphered this inscription. The priest's seminary belonging to the monastery, the internal arrangement of which was shown to us, was not very numerously attended. A wild-looking seminarist, coming from Sis in Cilicia, represented the Diaspora of that place—a small Armenian tribe which has to this day kept itself almost independent of Turkish rule. The seminarists sang for us some old national melodies, and we could only praise the purity and precision of their singing, as compared with the abominable dissonance of the Armenian liturgy. The melodies, which were sung in unison, reminded us of old German church music, and had something wild and plaintive about them. A new building, to be used for the seminary, or for some other kind of theological school, is in course of construction. The library of the monastery, which is famous, is said to conceal treasures as yet unrevealed, especially with regard to the history of Armenia during the Middle Ages. I only saw the miniatures, which are the same as we possess in Germany, and the manuscripts, of which I understood nothing. At the present time the printing establishment is of the chief importance; for it tends to spread abroad popular Armenian books, and it publishes a weekly periodical called the 'Ararat.'

Our one and-a-half day's sojourn at the monastery was spent in the most pleasant manner. I still recall with pleasure the mild summer's evening, which we passed in the garden enjoying the magnificent view of

the majestic Ararat. Another monk had joined us on that occasion, the only one, with the exception of the archimandrite, who spoke Russian. I had occasion, whilst they were speaking together, to notice with some surprise the extreme harshness of the Armenian language, which appears to possess no soft consonants. With them the euphonistic titles Georg and Gregor were converted into Kework and Krikor, but pronounced with a far more emphatic 'K' than is known to us. Our repasts, in which—it being Friday—our host did not participate, were prepared entirely in the European fashion; but I could not bring myself to like the wine of the place, which I had often heard praised. It was very strong, but had no bouquet, and could not be compared with Kachetia. I thought it my duty, on taking leave of our hosts, and after thanking them most cordially for their kind hospitality, to apologise for having introduced Ali, a mussulman, into the monastery. Surenianz set my mind at ease on that score, assuring me that during Divine service he frequently noticed in church more curious Tartars than devout Armenians. Besides, the monastery is held in high respect by all the surrounding Mussulman population.

The distance to Erivan only amounted to twelve miles, and this we soon accomplished, escorted on the road by half a dozen Tschapars, who were quite unnecessary and were several times relieved. We might as well have driven from Berlin to Charlottenberg with a mitrailleuse behind our carriage, for the road was as much frequented as one of our great *chaussées*. At

Erivan we found quarters prepared for us at the Crown-house. There is no hotel, and travellers must try to get a room at the club, if they cannot be accommodated at the Crown-house. They can breakfast and dine at the club, and will be able to get a glass of very palatable Bavarian beer, brewed at Erivan. This latter town is situated on the Zenqui, a limpid stream flowing out of the Goktscha lake, at a point where the former leaves the mountain chain through an abrupt ravine to enter the valley of the Arax. Thanks to the never-failing supply of water, the town is surrounded by a circle of gardens rich in foliage, and the sight of trees in dreary desolate Armenia is very refreshing to the eye. Fruits grown here are of exquisite quality, especially grapes and apples; but the peaches, which are of a hard kind, did not please us so much. The town is altogether Persian, the Russian quarter, which is unimportant, being excepted. Narrow winding lanes extending between walls of yellow clay utterly conceal the houses, and exclude all view, so that a stranger never knows where he is. As regards sights, the town only possesses two buildings worthy of notice; but these two are perfect gems. The first is a mosque behind the bazaar, which is not large, but most attractive, owing to its graceful construction, and richness in magnificent glazings; and the four splendid elm trees, which surround the fountain bubbling in the outer court, impart to the whole a most poetic aspect. In fact I never saw throughout the east so beautiful a mosque. We had no conception of

its existence, and came upon it quite by chance whilst wandering through the bazaar, which latter contained nothing remarkable. It being dusk when we entered, we had already walked through the interior without attracting attention, when one of the attendants, a coarse fellow, became aware of our presence, and ordered us in no very moderate language to quit immediately the sacred precincts. The other sight is the fortress which Paskiewitsch took by storm; and in consequence of this event he was surnamed 'Erivanski.' A Tartar bard has written a poem on this subject, which has been handed down to us by Bodenstedt in his 'Thousand and One Days in the East.' The fortress rises up on the edge of the rocky bank of the Zenqui, and contains a famous hall, formerly the audience chamber of the Persian governor, and hence still called 'Apartment of the Serdar.' It is decorated in the Persian style, and is full of mirrors, stalactite niches, and similar ornaments. A mosque situated on the fortress is very much destroyed, but is nevertheless worthy of notice on account of the rich glazing. It appears to have served as arsenal during the siege, for the court-yard is paved with bombs; and in the interior of the mosque cannon-balls and shells are heaped up like potatoes in a cellar. The great attraction of the fort is the view of Mount Ararat. Although during the previous eight days I had constantly seen Mount Ararat, and gazed upon it from different points of sight, never did it appear to me to stand forth in such majestic tranquillity as at present, notwithstand-

ing the distance of thirty-three miles which separated me from its summit. The view obtained from the Hall of the Serdar, or from the ramparts, comprises first, immediately below the spectator, the rocky ravine of the Zenqui, encircled by gardens luxuriant with verdure; beyond that the eye ranges along the fertile plain of the Arax, dotted over with villages, until it reaches the horizon, where, without the transition of any intervening heights, the double-coned Ararat ascends into the skies. To the northward and eastward it stands isolated; and only to the westward is it connected with a rugged mountain chain, which, later on, follows the course of the Arax. But even this chain is separated from the Ararat by a deep indenture in the land, so that nothing practically intervenes to impair the impression created by its superb loneliness. Whilst the sharply peaked cone of the Little Ararat, although at an elevation of 12,840 feet above the level of the sea, is free from snow, the cone of the Great Ararat, 16,916 feet in height, donned its white perennial crown. The sides of the mountain rose up in beautifully bold outline to the summit, on which popular belief still fancies that the ark is resting. The only sight in Europe which can be compared to this, is the view of Mount Etna from the theatre of Taormina. We lingered on the ramparts until the last ray of the setting sun dwindled away behind the peak. For a moment the mist, ascending from the valley, veiled the mountain, but its form re-appeared pale and mysterious in the light of the rising moon.

The first dawn of day found us the following morning on our way to the Ararat. Cossack horses were awaiting us at Kamarlou, the second station from Erivan, to convey us first to the monastery of Khorwirab, which we had been strongly advised to visit, and afterwards to Aralych at the foot of the Ararat. The country along the road was one continuous garden. One village joined on to another, and the waters of the Zenqui, and of other smaller streams flowing from the north east, had been carefully utilised to irrigate and fertilise the fields. The appearance too of the villages struck us as being more prosperous. Past Kamarlou the plentiful supply of water ceased, and the tract of land extending to Khorwirab was desolate, and grown over with briars. Our escort did not, this time, consist of Tschapars, but of the tartar *élite* of Kamarlou, who had joined us of their own accord, and some of whom were mounted on fine horses. We especially admired a grey horse, ridden by the elder of the village, and at an amble trot this animal was not inferior to the horse belonging to the Grand Duke Michael, which had excited our admiration at Borshom. We were very much disappointed with Khorwirab. It lies on an isolated rocky hill close to the Arax, and offers merely an extensive view down the valley of the river as far as the country about Nachitschewan. The principal sight in the monastery is said to be the well, in which King Tiridat kept Gregorius Illuminator, the Armenian apostle, a prisoner for thirteen years, until a vision moved the former to

release the apostle and to be converted to Christianity. Yet I could not help remarking that this well looked very much the same as any other well, and that if the apostle is to be regarded as one who enlightened all and everything around him, no trace remained in the well itself of its former occupant or even in the monastery. The latter place is presided over by an archimandrite. This dignitary received us arrayed in bright-coloured Persian stockings, which ill accorded with the monk's attire; he was very obliging, but could give us no information respecting art and architecture in connection with the monastery, which building however did not contain much of either. We were obliged to ascend the Arax about four miles to a ford, in order to reach Aralych, which is situated at a short distance on the opposite bank. The river at this point was more than a hundred paces in width, knee-deep, but very rapid so that we had to proceed very cautiously whilst crossing over. As far as the eye could reach, numerous herds of oxen and buffaloes were taking their midday bathe, visibly enjoying it. The opposite bank is in many parts marshy, owing to the bad regulations of the course of a little stream, the Kursou, the waters of which might be applied more beneficially to the fertilisation of the soil. Aralych lies in the plain; and, only two miles farther on, the ascent of the Ararat commences. This place contains the staff residence of the Uman Cossacks, a regiment of the Kouban army. The colonel received us with the greatest amiability, and insisted on our considering his house as our head-

quarters during our stay. He belonged to an old family of the Kabarda, and, although a Mahomedan, had obtained by diligent study a knowledge of the military systems existing throughout Europe, such as is seldom met with amongst Russian officers, the guards excepted. His acquaintance with the proceedings of the late war, and with the organisation of the Prussian army, was so complete and minute that I was frequently embarrassed by his questions. In strict accordance with Mahomedan tenets, he refrained from giving wine at dinner, but we had served to us instead some excellent English porter, no bad substitute for the former, considering the oppressive heat of the day. The afternoon was devoted to a siesta, and we spent the fine mild evening in front of the house. Meeting our gaze, the Ararat, supremely beautiful, rose up in the moonlight.

The Ararat, from its isolated position and imposing appearance, has from the earliest ages of mankind been enveloped in a haze of mysterious legends and traditions. That the ark should have rested upon its summit is comprehensible to all who notice that no peak in the surrounding chain can compete with it in elevation. It must, consequently, have been the first point visible above the face of the waters. The names of numerous places in the neighbourhood bear traces of diluvian tradition. Thus Aghurri, the only village situated on the slope signifies 'we planted the vine;' Nakhitchevan, the spot where Noah descended into the valley, 'He descended first;' and the name Erivan,

correctly pronounced Yeryevân, means the place of his permanent settlement. Noah's grave is shown near Nakhitchevan, and stands in high veneration both with Armenians and Tartars. It is curious that, although the biblical tradition has been preserved, and is notorious throughout the entire region, the name of the mountain itself has been altogether obliterated. The Armenians residing in the vicinity know it only under the title of Massis Lêrn; and the Tartars as Aghry Dagh, Lêrn and Dagh both signifying mountain. The monastery of Etschmiadzin, in its weekly publication, has alone revived the name of Ararat.

The Ararat possesses a qualification unusual in Europe, of never having been reproduced photographically, or indeed represented with tolerable accuracy in any manner. In all the drawings and lithographs which I have seen, the peak appears to ascend in an abrupt conical form, by no means in accordance with the reality. Its rise is not occasioned by steep acclivities, but rather by gentle gradations, slightly increasing towards the higher regions; and to this feature it owes the extreme grandeur of its appearance. From the west northward to south-east, it is encompassed by extensive plains, and the mountain ridge which approaches it to the westward, is, as previously mentioned, severed from it by a kind of broad ravine. The mountain chain running south-east towards Makù in Persia, as well as the plateau 6,000 feet in height, which joins it in the south, are invisible to the spectator in Russia, as they lie concealed behind the mountain

itself, and no projecting eminence, not even a hill, impedes the view of what is probably the greatest elevation in the world. Between Aralych (2,600 feet) and the summit of the Ararat (16,916 feet), a difference of level exists amounting to 14,300 feet, an altitude scarcely attained by the giants of the Cordilleras and of Mexico, which are situated upon high plateaus, and, possibly, not even by the culminating point of the Himalayas in the highest and wildest mountain regions. The form of the mountain is easily described. It consists of two cones; the radius at the base of the greater cone being about fourteen miles, and that at the base of the lesser cone being a little over nine miles. Both are united up to an elevation of 8,000 feet, at which point the Great and the Little Ararat diverge. The rise is unimportant during the first half of the ascent; by a mean gradation of less than 10° an altitude of 6,000 feet above the level of the sea is attained. From this elevation the rise is steeper; and from the slightly curved ridge, which separates the two peaks, the Little Ararat ascends in a conical form, with almost mathematical precision, at an angle of 45°, until it reaches its rather circular summit. This summit forms the common boundary of Russia, Persia, and Turkey. The Great Ararat, on the other hand, possesses an irregular formation. Whilst its rise between the respective elevation of 6,000 and 10,000 feet, amounts to about 30°, declivities of considerable abruptness (up to about 60°) commence from the latter altitude on the west and south side, and also irregular forms occasioned by terrace-

shaped intermissions which resolve themselves, 2,000 feet below the peak, into an ice-field, which rises to the highest summit at the former proportion. To the north and east the rise, although somewhat less steep is almost as regular as in the case of the Little Ararat. On the north side an enormous chasm, the sides of which are perpendicular, and which are about 4,000 feet in height at its upper extremity, winds down from the ice-field near the summit to an altitude of 6,000 feet above the level of the sea. Here was situated the monastery of St. James, and further down the village of Aghurri, both of which, within this century, have been buried by a fall of the mountain. The other half of this abyss is filled in by a glacier. A second apparently smaller glacier runs north-east through a narrow channel to the south. I also saw great masses of ice; but I could not ascertain their direction or connection with the upper ice-field. According to the Five Verst Map, the line of perpetual snow begins at an altitude of 13,400 feet, and—those parts excepted where chasms and rocky walls do not admit of the snow remaining—the summit lies concealed beneath a white covering. It is to be regretted that topographers who have expended so much care and attention in drawing up the Five Verst Map should have neglected altogether the orography of the Ararat; for the representation of it, as given in the aforesaid map, resembles the outline of a mountain shaped like a caterpillar with a white spot in the middle to indicate snow—a drawing such as a lower-form schoolboy would produce, and without the slightest value in a

geographical respect. Such instances must make the tourist and mountain-explorer sigh for a Dufour's General Staff Map.

The ascent of the Ararat has been several times accomplished by Parrot, Abich, and others. The first to reach the summit, after two failures, was Parrot. The ascent does not seem to be a very arduous task to practised mountain-climbers, so far as the snow regions and glaciers are concerned; and the undertaking is much facilitated by the circumstance that night-quarters, at an altitude of 12,500 feet, can be found in a very comfortable and protected position on the Kipgöl, which point is reached without difficulty by oxen and horses. There then remains five-and-a-half thousand feet to ascend, a distance far less than that required for the generality of glacier-excursions in Switzerland. But it should be borne in mind that travellers must provide themselves with all the requisites for a mountain-expedition, and that, in the Caucasus, those who are fond of climbing over glaciers will do well to follow the example of Freshfield, and bring with them an experienced guide from Switzerland; for, according to the latter's experience, none of the inhabitants—the Baksan Tartars excepted—are conversant with glaciers. The Ararat is probably believed to be inaccessible on account of its sacred character, and the narratives of Parrot and of his successors are regarded as mere fables à la Münchausen, if not as positive blasphemies. According to a legend, St. Gregorius, or some later saint, endeavoured to bring away for the monastery of Etschmiadzin a piece of the

Ark, which still remains jammed in between a narrow cleft of the rock situated on the extreme height, and visible from below. After he had made many ineffectual attempts, an angel announced to him in a vision that no human foot should ever tread the summit of the Ararat. At the same time the saint received as a reward for his pious exertions a splinter of the wood, which, if I recollect rightly, is preserved in the monastery of Kjeghart, near Erivan. The popular tradition is so deeply rooted in the minds of the people that Parrot was unable to obtain an escort of Armenians, and had to accept the service of Tartars and Cossacks in their stead. Even the enlightened Archimandrite, Surenianz, would not believe that these ascents had been really accomplished.

As we lacked the different requisites employed in mountain-climbing, as also a guide experienced in crossing glaciers, and moreover, not being 'in condition' for severe walking trips—a circumstance of which we had been made fully aware at the Pass of Latpari—we naturally gave up all idea of ascending the peak. But we did not wish to bid farewell to the Ararat without making ourselves more thoroughly acquainted with some of its surrounding features; and we accordingly determined to visit Aghurri, and thence, after penetrating on the one side into the immense chasm, to return to the other side and to continue on to the Kipgöl. The Colonel kindly provided us with horses and an escort of six Cossacks. Unfortunately, we discovered too late that none of these Cossacks could understand the

Tartar language, and they were consequently useless to us at Aghurri. They were, besides, the most indolent and unsympathetic fellows I ever met with during the whole of my journey. Their horses, too, were in a lamentable condition, and could scarcely carry their own weight. We did not make a very early start, and after riding across the short distance separating us from the foot of the mountain, we commenced ascending in a straight direction the very gradual incline leading up to the village of Aghurri, at which place we arrived about 11 A.M. The briars, which grow in the valley of the Arax, ceased abruptly at the foot of the mountain; and during the remainder of the way scarcely a plant was to be seen. After its destruction the village of Aghurri was rebuilt at no great distance from its former position, and possesses some meagre fields irrigated by the waters of the above-mentioned glacier. Its wealth appears to consist chiefly in cattle, which find good pasturage along the edges of the abyss and on the slopes towards the Little Ararat, parts of which are less barren than those we had just ridden over. We took up our quarters in the building where the Cossack guard is stationed during the summer months. The post had, however, already been withdrawn. We next summoned the village elder, and requested horses and a guide to accompany us the following morning to the Kipgöl. No one spoke Russian in the village, and as our Cossacks were ignorant of the Tartar language, I had to fall back upon a Turkish pocket dictionary in order to make myself understood. Contrary to every expectation all

went off admirably, and the village elder promised to have three horses and a guide in readiness for us at 2 A.M. Our intention was to take only one of the Cossacks with us—a middle-aged soldier, who seemed to be a plucky fellow—and to leave the rest of our useless escort behind us in Aghurri, where they might revel to their hearts' content in their ruling passion—sleep. We did not succeed in hunting up the smallest article of food in the village, and were thrown back upon our resources, consisting of the victuals brought with us, amongst which German sausages and extract of meat played an essential part.

It being still early in the day, we decided to start at once for the glacier. Just as we were setting out, we had a curious interview with the chief of some nomad Kurds, encamped in the neighbourhood. He had received a summons to appear before the justice of the peace, probably for stealing cattle, and requested us to explain to him the purport of the document. His very scanty knowledge of Russian will hardly have rendered my explanation more intelligible than the summons itself. We then ascended the chasm without taking with us a guide, as we were both of us unable to understand one another. The base of the abyss was narrow, and the glacier stream which flowed along it was joined by a multitude of small streams, the waters of which were for the most part bitter and undrinkable. Since the fall of the mountain in 1842, which destroyed old Aghurri, the lower part of the chasm has assumed a wild, desolate appearance; yet the slopes on each side

were covered with fine Alpine meadows, over which herds of cows were roaming. We soon had to leave the base of the abyss, and to climb up the eastern ridge by means of a goat-path. A fine limpid spring, with a kind of shed close to it for the shepherds to take refuge in, designates the spot near which the monastery of St. James formerly stood before the mountain slip. Nothing as yet was to be seen of the glacier; in front was a wild mass of rocks, to ascend which was really hard work. Arrived at the top, we noticed that this was the moraine of the glacier, and that we were now, after two and a half hours' walk from Aghurri, standing upon bare ice at an altitude of about 8,500 feet. The view from the upper extremity of the abyss was overpowering. The glacier, covered by crags, after ascending at a moderate incline a distance of about two miles, terminated in a circle of rocks, the ice-crowned steep of which rose to a height of more than 4,000 feet, the effect being rendered more imposing by the comparatively narrow width of the abyss, which did not exceed a thousand paces. Of all the views of high mountain regions in the Alps which I have witnessed, the Roththal below the Jungfrau could alone bear comparison with this. The lateness of the hour, unfortunately, did not admit of our penetrating further on the glacier, and we were obliged to think of returning. To this intent we selected the western ridge, but soon discovered that we had not acted wisely; for instead of the goat-path, which on the eastern ridge was at all events practicable, we merely encountered here a wild chaos of

fragments of rocks. We ended, however, on arrival in the valley, by losing our way owing to the darkness setting in, and until the moon rose we failed in getting back to the right track, which brought us about 8 P.M., somewhat subdued, to Aghurri. Our Cossacks had already begun to feel anxious for our safety. The whole night I was unable to close my eyes, for the vermin fully compensated themselves at my expense for the departure of the Cossack post, and heartily glad was I when the hour for the start arrived.

In defiance of all Eastern habits and customs, the guide appeared punctually at the precise time of starting with three good strong Tartar horses. Attended by him and the eldest Cossack—the only one of any use—we set out on our march about 3 A.M. The weather was most favourable: bright moonlight night, clear atmosphere and low temperature, and the prospect before us of a fine day. As we were still on the north side of the mountain, and the Kipgöl, the object of our excursion, being situated on the west side, we had to make an oblique ascent of the north-western slope. Our horses were good mountain-climbers, and we got along at a tolerable pace over the rather steep grassy incline, up which there was a kind of goat-path. By sunrise we had already reached an altitude of 9,000 feet above the level of the sea. The view which presented itself to our gaze was magnificent. The sun had just commenced to light up the peaks of the mountains immediately before us, and the valley of the Arax, lying at our feet, still remained enveloped in

a grey mist: the river itself, the course of which we could follow for a distance of fifty-six miles, could however be discerned in the first light of the dawning day. As the clouds gradually dispersed, and the first rays of the sun came shining down upon us, the entire panorama disclosed itself so clearly to our view that with the naked eye we could distinguish the most minute details. Below us flowed the Arax from Külpi to Khorwirab, and in the background the walls of Sardarabad, the towers of Etschmiadzin, and the fortress of Erivan, might easily be recognised. In front of us rose the barren mountains which encircle Lake Goktscha, and which resemble the walls of a gigantic crater; to the left appeared the broad and ugly ridge of the Alagöz, over the flanks of which the mountains near Kars, though distant more than ninety miles, were peeping; and to the left, scarcely visible, the chain, which starts westward of the Ararat, completed the picture with the conical-shaped mountain of Külpi. Although, hitherto, the ascent had been tolerably regular, further on steep ridges had to be overcome, which, on account of the bare rock, considerably impeded the progress of the horses. At an altitude of about 11,000 feet we passed the base of a glacier of no very great importance. To our amazement, along the green patch which lay before it, and at a spot only trodden by nomad Kurds, we found a wall erected, the presence of which may well occasion surprise. It may possibly determine the frontier line between Russia and Turkey. After a good hour's laborious ascent we

attained the summit of the ridge, which forms the watershed between the Arax and its tributary the Alzas, also called the river of Makù; and beheld close below us a small circular Alpine lake, the Kipgöl, well known to all Ararat explorers. On the shores of this lake we partook of a frugal breakfast, screened from violent winds by the projecting rocks; but nothing would induce our guide, who was a strict Sheeite, to join us in the repast. The altitude of the Kipgöl has been variously estimated. I put it down at over 12,500 feet; but our barometers were not quite reliable at so great an elevation: and this calculation agrees both with the apparent proximity of the snow-line and the duration of time—five hours—which we required to accomplish the ascent on our first-rate climbing horses. East of us rose the peak, which, however, could not be seen from our vantage ground, its snow-field breaking off towards us in steep clefts and numerous glaciers. Intervening ridges prevented us from determining their direction and connection. To the westward the ridge, below which lies the Kipgöl, continued running on in abrupt declivities, and below us was a broad valley, gradually declining terrace-shaped towards the Turkish high-plain. The upper terrace was about one mile in length, of about an equal width and nearly level—a strange phenomenon certainly at such an altitude, recalling the formation of the Formazza valley above Lago Maggiore. Looking beyond the edge of this terrace, we could see far into Turkey. Immediately before us a wild mountainous

country without any very permanent peaks enclosed the sources of the Eastern Euphrates (Murad-su); and to the south-east rose up from the banks of Lake Wan the snow-crowned Sipandagh, full ninety-four miles distant, towering above the surrounding mountains, and clearly visible. A mountainous country, with numerous peaks, joined it to the eastward; and the most remote of these peaks were not improbably the mountains of Dshulamerk, the Chaldean country, which is as yet almost unknown. The Turkish town Bajezid could not be seen, though situated immediately beneath us. It reclines against a hill, which hides it from view. The main caravan-route from Trebizonde to Tabreez, viâ Erzeroom, passes through it.

After resting a few hours, and after shooting a little while at the numerous red-legged partridges which were playing about the clefts of the rocks, we set out on our return journey. Some distance from Aghurri our guide in great consternation drew our attention to two Koord robbers, who were urging on a donkey laden with goods. Although, from former experiences, we did not much credit his assertions, we nevertheless gave way to his wishes, and a regular battue ensued, directed against the two robbers, whom we finally drove into a corner. As soon as we had them in our power, we found that they were most inoffensive individuals, and the donkey turned out to be their own property. All the excitement had, consequently been in vain; and I made up my mind never again to believe in the existence of robbers in the East, until I had

actual experience of them—an event which happily never occurred. Later on we passed the tents of the Kurds. They consist of round or long frames made of wooden poles, the roof being formed by a piece of black material: there are no side walls; but a kind of hurdle-work, often covered over with rugs tastefully designed, which runs round the tent, and serves as a fence, though hardly as a protection against the weather. The dress of the Kurds differs essentially from that which I saw in Southern Kurdistan, and which is described further on. It resembles more the Turkish costume, and red appears to be an especially favourite colour. Tartar and Persian nomads frequently show great distrust in their intercourse with strangers; but the Koords are said to be, on the contrary, free and open, and a European entering their tents is greeted by the housewife unveiled—a circumstance contrasting distinctly with the custom prevailing in the East. We were again questioned about yesterday's summons from the justice of the peace; and as one of the Kurds, a brother of the accused, could speak Russian intelligibly, I was able to explain to him that the person summoned was bound to appear in seventeen days time (there was no other means of making him understand the date) before the justice of the peace to answer to a disputed question of property with regard to a cow. This explanation tended visibly to allay his apprehensions; for the Oriental does not fear an event which is only to take place after an interval of seventeen days. The justice of the peace, too, by that time

would have forgotten all about the matter. A short distance from Aghurri a troop of seven roe-deer, accompanied by a large buck, passed us on their way to a brook. We tried to stalk them, but without success. Later on, at Aralych, we learned that wild sheep (Argali) are also to be met with here, but that there are no wild goats or chamois.

At one o'clock we reached Aghurri, to the frantic delight of the dogs belonging to the Cossacks; our escort received with very discontented looks the intimation that we intended to return the same day to Aralych. They probably regarded our determination as an encroachment on their afternoon nap. Meanwhile the villagers brought us some excellent sour milk and egg-cakes, so that with appetites appeased—an event quite unanticipated—we were able to remount our horses at 3 P.M. An incident occurred on the road, occasioned by the behaviour of the Cossack sergeant, which caused my long-tired patience to give way. On reaching the edge of the plain we were just on the point of putting our horses into a trot, so as to arrive in good time at Aralych, when he remarked in a very rude manner that we were doing too much at the horses, and must ride at a foot-pace—this, too, after scarcely coming nine miles. The fellow had been annoying me for some time, and I gathered up all my knowledge of the Russian language and gave him to understand what his position was: shortly afterwards we arrived in Aralych, much relieved in mind. There we found a large company assembled: some

gentlemen from Erivan, who had come over to shoot, and the district justice of the peace, a German. The latter gave us considerable information respecting the manners and customs of the people, and especially of the Kurds, whose cattle-stealing propensities frequently brought them under his immediate notice. He told us that the most difficult part of a magistrate's duties arose from the inevitable necessity of being obliged to become acquainted with all the different languages spoken in the district, namely: Russian, Turco-Tartar, Armenian, Persian, and Kurd, all of which he knew. One of the gentlemen from Erivan, whom the justice of the peace introduced to us as 'Mr. Petermann the sportsman,' told such marvellous stories about the abundance of game in the valley of the Arax, that we felt disposed to look upon him in the light of a second Münchausen. However he sustained his reputation the next morning; for close to the house, and almost before our eyes, he shot in an hour and a half eighteen woodcocks and snipes. We took a most affecting farewell of the kind and hospitable Colonel, and before separating we drank the healths of our respective countries and armies in champagne—a beverage which, as everyone knows, Mahomet has not forbidden to believers.

Our baggage had been sent on under the charge of a Cossack to the post-station Aghamzalu, the next station to Erivan. We rode there by a shorter cut, thereby avoiding the circuitous route by Kamarlou, which we had originally taken in order to visit the monastery of

Khorwirab. The Arax here being too deep to ford, we crossed over to the opposite bank in a ferry-boat, generally used by the Cossacks, and our horses swam after us, their saddles having been taken off. We learnt to our amazement at Aghamzalu that no Cossack had been seen there with our baggage. We had therefore to decide whether we would await his arrival during an unlimited period, or continue our journey to Erivan, leaving the baggage to find its way after us. We chose the latter alternative, and near to the village fell in with the Cossack not far from a Tscharpar-post, where, contrary to our instructions, he had deposited our effects. It again required a little demonstrative energy to induce him to accompany us to Erivan. On the way to the town we noticed extensive fields planted with melons, which latter are sold on the ground. The proprietor erects a booth close to his piece of land, and there sells his fruits at a ridiculously cheap rate to the passers-by. Besides the ordinary yellow sugar-melon and the very juicy water-melon, excellent for quenching thirst, there is also a third species called Dutma. This in size and shape resembles the sugar-melon, but even when perfectly ripe, the core is of a light-green colour, and it possesses too a more aromatic flavour than the latter, and is supposed to be less liable to produce fever.

After five hours' ride on horseback—by no means a pleasant performance in the great heat—we reached the town, where Ali, who had continually been haunted by visions of Kurd robbers, was, in fear and trembling,

awaiting our arrival. In the evening we paid a second visit to the fortress and mosque; but the view from the former was cast over, the Ararat being enveloped in clouds; and as regards the latter, we had hardly passed through the entrance to the outer court before we were rudely ejected by the guardian. On returning home through the bazaar, which on account of the darkness was already being closed, the night-watch, armed with sticks, came upon us, declaring that all persons found trespassing after sunset were regarded as thieves. In fact, we were not in luck; and—to wind up the day's mishap—we were told at the club, where we took supper, that there was no more beer in the cellar.

The following morning we left Erivan in an atrocious telega, the worst I ever had the misfortune to drive in. In reality the seats consisted merely of two holes; but the police-master, who pretended to have been unable to procure a tarantass, assured us that it was the best in the station. The new road between Lake Gortscha and Erivan was not yet completed; and the old road, as far as the first station Eilar, was positively dangerous on account of the stones, besides being barren and dreary. A shower had fortunately cooled the atmosphere, and the heat was no longer oppressive. We dismissed the escort of Cossacks, who were quite unnecessary, and who were so constantly being relieved as to become a perfect nuisance. At Eilar, the first station, some rather powerful language was necessary in order to obtain horses; at Suchaja Fontanka, the

second station, up to which place neither the bad state of the road nor the barren nature of the landscape had at all changed for the better, we experienced no delay in changing horses; but, to equalise matters, the postmaster at the time of payment considerately made a mistake of several versts in his own favour. Hitherto we had been ascending the east side of the Zenqui valley; but after continuing a few versts we left the main road, and turned to the left into the valley; we then crossed the river, and after passing a large village Caravansary reached Daraschitschach, the term of our day's journey. This place, now occupied by Constantinowskoje, a Malakan colony, furnishes a summer resort, and is to Erivan what Borshom is to Tiflis. It lies at an altitude of 6,500 feet, and from May to September all who can seize the opportunity fly from the heat and dust of Erivan to this charming little mountain valley, where forests of low oak betray the proximity of the Grusinian frontier.

General Karmarlin, Governor of Erivan, had been expecting us to dinner; but the inevitable delays at the post-stations had retarded our arrival, and we could not call upon him before the evening. We dined at the club, in which institution, amply characterised by its tablecloth, we had to wait three hours before dinner was served—so little preparation was there for strangers; and in the meantime we strove to appease our appetites by a walk to the beautiful ruins of a monastery a little behind the village. It was a church rather well preserved, in the façade of which the in-

habitants had piously carved several hundred *ex voto* crosses. The evening was spent in a very agreeable manner. We had music and some very interesting conversations with our amiable hosts, and obtained authentic information regarding the Kurds of this Government. They seemed in reality to be far better than their reputation, and they are only hated by Tartars and Armenians on account of their predilection for other people's cattle. Highway robberies can no longer be imputed to them, and the European traveller may continue his journey without fear. Their leader is Dashafar-Agha, an old chief of a tribe, whom the Russian Government, in order to win him over, appointed major-general. He looks very stately in his national costume, with a general's epaulets, but he resides on Turkish territory, near the sources of the Euphrates. We also obtained information about the Malakans, another tribe in the neighbourhood. They live in numerous colonies along the Tiflis road from Erivan as far down as the valley of the Kura, and, like the Duchobortz, are a religious sect, transplanted to these regions. Their religious character is obscure, and in most respects they resemble the Duchobortz, especially as regards the carrier's wagon and employment of German harness; on the other hand, they wear the dress of the Russian peasant, and as a sect do not stand so high in reputation as the Duchobortz.

After an icy cold night we started in good time, and reached at eleven o'clock Jellenowka, a station situated on Lake Goktscha. At the preceding station,

Achty, the postmaster had combined, but unsuccessfully, with the inspector (Smatritjel) to overcharge us to the extent of thirteen versts; but, upon being assured that we only regarded him as a miserable cheat, he finally desisted from further attempts at imposition, and assuming a countenance of injured innocence, wrote out another receipt. The Goktscha Lake, equal in superficies to the largest lake in Switzerland, and situated 6,340 feet above the level of the sea, disappointed me very much. I had heard glowing accounts of the beauty of the scenery, and expected to find it resembling that of the Lake of Constance or that of the Lake of Geneva. But I observed only a wide expanse encircled by barren mountains of uniform shape, without a village to be seen on the shore or a boat's sail on the tranquil surface of the water. The dreary impression created by the appearance of this inhospitable region is intensified by the sight of the small grey monastery of Sewanga, which lies near to the shore upon a solitary cliff. Very different, later on, was the effect produced by a view of Lake Urumia, with its glorious mountains, its romantic islands, and the thriving villages situated along its banks. One of the chief attractions of Lake Goktscha consisted in the excellent trout which it possesses, and of which we tasted a delicious specimen at Daratschitschach. At Jellenowka a new road, recently completed, commences, which for bold curves and perfect construction could compare with any road in Switzerland. It is to be hoped that it will be kept in good repair. It continues for nearly ten miles along the

slope, but the views from it are not picturesque, owing to the desolate character of the surrounding district. We were, however, compensated for the barren nature of the landscape by a farewell view of the snowy summit of the Ararat, which became visible on our attaining the highest point of the road opposite the monastery Sewanga, and then disappeared for the last time. At Tschubukli, which was formerly a station, the road turns off from the lake and ascends a steep incline until it reaches Simeonowka, the present station, a Malakan village, situated close to the watershed, which is 7,337 feet in height. The scenery here displayed as sudden a contrast as at Atzchur. Scarely had we traversed the pass-height than the stony, desolate regions of Armenia vanished, and we descended by a very tortuous route through the splendid oak and beech forests of Grusia to the valley of the Akstafa. Delidshan, the first place we arrived at in the Government of Yelissawetpol, and the station where the respective roads from Tiflis, Erivan, and Alexandrapol cross one another, is a large pleasant Malakan village, the wooden houses of which, constructed after the model of those belonging to the German colonists on the Molotschna, recal to mind the habitations in the Black Forest. Another agreeable surprise awaited us. As long as the roads continue in the valley of the Akstafa the post-station remains in the hands of the Malakans, and the traveller meets here with more cleanliness, politeness, and punctuality than is the case elsewhere in Russia. He will not unfrequently obtain a small open wagon made of boards

instead of the abominable telega; the former being more comfortable, and drawn by two horses, which are just as efficacious as the impracticable troika. The valley is charming; it contains magnificent forests interspersed with rocks, side-valleys with foaming streams, and pleasant Malakan villages on each side of the road, which is enlivened by numerous caravans of camels. Our drive was most enjoyable; and the darkness setting in alone obliged us to halt at the station Caravansarai (Istibulak), a large village, situated some sixty-five miles from our previous night's quarters, and eighty-four miles from Tiflis.

To accomplish this distance in one day without a special courier's pass would entail a speedy relay of horses at each station; and as this convenience is only to be obtained by largely remunerating the Yamstchiks, we promised the evening before to give our drivers a whole rouble if they would be ready to start the next morning punctually at 5 A.M. They kept their word, and brought us to the first station, a distance of eighteen versts, within fifty-five minutes. The road was in good condition, and the pleasant landscape, which resembled that of yesterday, enhanced the enjoyment of the early drive. Close to the first station we observed some squadrons of Cossack troops bivouacking on their way to the south. The valley gradually opened, and the mountain ranges on each side declined in height. On the horizon was just visible the yellow steppe of the Kura, and beyond it lay the main chain of the Caucasus, still wrapt in the morning mist,

and discernible by its outlines. The main chain does not afford the same features here as in Swanethia: the line of perpetual snow is seldom attained, and the height of the ridge is so uniformly even, that the chain presents more the appearance of a wall than that of a mountain range. Alone, to our left, in a north-north-westerly direction, the snowy peak of the Kaslek, glistening in the sunshine, towers above the intervening mountains. At Akstafinsk, a station, where the road to Jelissáwetpol (Gundsha) branches off to the right, our route enters the Kura steppe, a dreary and monotonous waste, rarely interrupted by a Tartar village, the huts of which are quite buried away beneath the ground, and resemble molehills. A *chaussée* certainly exists, but in so dilapidated a condition that it is never used in dry weather, all traffic passing across the steppe. The district appears to be insecure on account of robbers, who ply their calling in the neighbourhood of the Red Bridge. This construction derives its name from the bricks out of which it is composed. It dates from the time of the Persians, and presents a very substantial appearance. This bridge spans the Chram, a river plentifully supplied with water, and a tributary of the Kura. The valley is dotted here and there with patches of green, affording an agreeable contrast to the yellow steppes along the road. One peculiarity of the Red Bridge deserves notice: the pillars resting upon the land on each side of the stream are hollow, and serve as caravansaries. Towards noon we reached the ill-famed spot where the attacks of robbers—events

which I can scarcely credit—had occurred the previous year. The remainder of the journey was less enjoyable, for the dust and heat became more and more oppressive, and at each station the difficulty of obtaining horses increased. We also fell in with some squadrons of the Cossack regiment which we had passed in the morning. Their unsatisfactory appearance on the march confirmed my former statements respecting the condition of Cossack troops. They rode in twos, threes, and fours, the line extending over a distance of twenty versts. Their bad seat on horseback, and their dirty condition, both as regards man and beast, defy description. Around the standard of only one sotnie (squadron) between thirty and forty men were assembled. The name of the regiment was inscribed on the standard. It was the Chapjor regiment of the Kouban Bann.

At a distance of a few miles from Tiflis the road, once more ascending, crosses the ridge of a projecting mountain some thousand feet in height. This rise might easily have been avoided, at little additional cost, by continuing the road between this mountain and the Kura. From this eminence the traveller at all events obtains a good survey of the Maria Canal, constructed for the purpose of irrigating the Karajaz steppe. One principal and seventeen lateral canals connect the Kura with a small lake on its left bank; and it is estimated that, should the undertaking prove successful, an area of ten square miles of steppe will be converted into arable land. This district is also the

scene of the Grand Ducal boar-hunts, of which mention has previously been made. In the afternoon everything apparently conspired to delay our progress. The post-masters were drunk, no relays of horses were forthcoming; and at the station before Tiflis, from which place we could distinguish the towers of the city, we were very nearly compelled to pass the night, for we could only obtain one telega, and were obliged to leave Ali behind to follow after us with the baggage. The road became more animated as we approached the town. Along the Kura rows of water-wheels were employed to irrigate the luxuriant gardens near the bank; carriages were returning home from excursions in the country; pedestrians, clad in various costumes, camels, buffalo-carts, thronged the way; finally we came to a stone pavement, over which we commenced jolting along, a movement occasioning no little torture to our limbs, which were wellnigh exhausted by the three days' journey in the telega. After passing extensive suburbs we arrived at the Bazaar quarter, where, notwithstanding the approaching nightfall, great bustle and activity prevailed; and at seven o'clock, on arriving at the Hôtel du Caucase, we were rejoined by our companion, who in the meantime had entirely recovered from the effects of his illness.

CHAPTER IV.

TIFLIS TO PETROWSK.

Tiflis—Excursion to Kachetia—German Colonies—Signach—Carrying off the Princesses—Cultivation of Wine-grape in the Caucasus—Achmeti—Tioneti—Chewsur Tribe—Ananur—Pass of Kasbek—Ossetes—Defile of Dariel—Vladikawkas—Wars in the Caucasus—The right wing—The left wing—Muridism—Schamyl—To Groznaja—The Tschetschnià—Weden—Andi—Population of Daghestan—Bottlich—Chunsak—Ravine of Karadagh—The Gunib—Bridge of Saltinski—Chodshalmachi—Urmi—Dshingutai—Temirchanschura—Petrowsk.

TIFLIS is the city of contrasts. Possibly in Cairo a similar mixture exists of Oriental poetry and Oriental depravity combined with European civilisation and European sobriety. I must destroy one illusion. Tiflis is not the city of Bodenstedt's 'Thousand and One Days in the East.' I, too, expected to see Mirza Schaffy's jovial figure and closely-shorn head, and to hear in the evening the tones of his voice pouring forth the love-strains of Hafiz, whilst some fair maiden, veiled in the white tschadra, pauses on the flat roof of her house, half-hidden amidst fragrant bushes, to listen to his melodies. But the first sight of the city dispelled the vision. Mirza Schaffy is a poetical myth,

and the Tiflis of the present day is not his abode. The Oriental quarters of the city are only picturesque by day, when a confused throng of people and tribes enlivens the streets; at the approach of night the bright colouring of the picture fades away, and only the brawling of some drunken Grusinian is heard where once resounded the immortal songs of Hafiz. Tiflis cannot boast, like other cities of the East, of a high antiquity and of a glorious past. Not until the latter portion of the Middle Ages was the regal seat transferred from Mtzchet, the ancient Grusinian residence, to Tiflis; and from that period, too, dates the decline of this once powerful kingdom. The country was devastated by Persian invaders, and the city was destroyed. A few churches and the vast ruins of the old castle, which from its lofty position commands the city, bear record of the mighty rule of the Bagratides. When, at the commencement of this century, the last king of that race ceded his dominions to Russia, in order to obtain protection against Persia, the new rulers found Grusia a wilderness, and the city desolate and in ruins. Many changes have taken place since that time. Tiflis became the residence of the Lieutenant of the Caucasus and of various central authorities. It became the centre of a network of roads, and the recently opened railway has brought it into communication with the Black Sea. The old quarters were rebuilt; new districts, erected after the style of provincial towns in Russia, were joined on to these, and a colony of thriving Germans has founded a pleasant suburb. The city is now

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steadily increasing, and the population numbers about 100,000 souls.

The position of Tiflis is remarkably ugly. Lying in a hollow between barren yellow mountains, the outlines of which are not picturesque, it lacks air and verdure; and no sooner has the great heat of summer rendered further residence in the city undesirable, than all who can seek refuge in the mountains retire to their summer retreats; and here they remain until late in the autumn, when the rainy weather sets in. The rapid Kura divides the city into two unequal parts. Flowing first over a broad bed, it penetrates, in the midst of the city, a narrow ravine extending between steep rocks. Two bridges, constructed upon bold arches, extend high above the water, connecting together both banks of the Oriental quarter; a third bridge, higher up, promotes the traffic between the Russian quarters. Official life is concentrated in the Russian district, on the right bank of the Kura, where broad streets may be seen, with stately houses and elegant shops. The unpaved causeways, with their clouds of dust in the summer, and fathomless dirt in the winter, so humorously described by Dumas, no longer furnish a cause for complaint. The traveller will find at the present time in Tiflis better pavements than exist in most Russian towns, and certainly far better than those at St. Petersburg or at Moscow. The droskies are excellent, comfortable vehicles; the horses are good, and the fares (for the Caucasus) moderate. It is certainly remarkable that the drosky system, which in St. Petersburg and

Moscow still continues in its antediluvian state, and which in Kief and Odessa is still in a very inferior condition, should have attained throughout the Caucasus, and even in the smallest places, a degree of perfection hardly surpassed in European cities; indeed, I never saw better horses or carriages than at Bakû, on the Caspian Sea. The highflown name bestowed upon the vehicle is not less in accordance with its general excellency. Every conveyance is called a phaeton, however much it may deviate in construction from that particular kind of carriage. Ali applied the name 'phaeton' even to the driver; and Ovid would have stood aghast at seeing the many ragged unpoetical namesakes of his ambitious hero.

The European quarter is not rich in imposing edifices. The palace of the Imperial Lieutenant is a fine building, without being magnificent. The interior contains a hall rich in mirrors, in the Persian style, and other apartments decorated with handsome carpets and arms; but the building, taken as a whole, is not ostentatious. In the study of the Grand Duke Michael there is a relievo plan of the Caucasus, beautifully executed, and occupying an entire wall of the room; as a specimen of workmanship it is quite on a par with the Five Verst Map. Behind the palace is a pleasant park, prettily laid out, and well supplied with water even in summer, and which, consequently, offers an agreeable contrast to the small public garden opposite, where the trees, scorched by the heat and smothered by the dust, droop their heads disconsolately.

The Caucasian Museum, close by, is a very interesting building. It is a creation of modern times, and one of the most successful of its kind to my knowledge. The physical and geological productions of the country are here fully represented. The director is Dr. Radde, a naturalist well known in the scientific world. He earned his spurs in Siberia, and has been actively employed in the Caucasus for a number of years. An indefatigable explorer of the country, even of the most remote recesses of the mountain regions, he is considered as an authority on all matters connected with the natural history of the Caucasus; and the scientific reports which are published of his expeditions supply very valuable information to the tourist. Amongst his descriptions the 'Monography of the Longitudinal High Valleys of Imeretia and Mingrelia' has become a standard work. He has displayed much taste in the arrangement of the zoological department. Contrary to the system followed in our museums, where stuffed animals are marshalled in line, like a row of soldiers, the Caucasian specimens are represented in their most lifelike positions, from the wild goat clambering up a rock to the raven picking out the eyes of a dead camel. The director was unfortunately absent in Europe at the time of our visit, and we, consequently, could not avail ourselves of his valuable guidance through his especial domain, the zoological and botanical departments. The remaining collections are not very complete, owing to the brief period which has elapsed since the foundation of the museum; they supply, however,

a fair criterion of the national industry. A great portion of the contents of these departments had been forwarded to the International Exhibition at Moscow, where I had already seen them. Not far from the palace and the museum is the theatre, situated on an irregular public square. There is nothing remarkable about the exterior, but the interior is a perfect gem. Each successive winter Muscovite actors and Italian opera-singers provide entertainment for the Russian society, and civilisation for the Grusinians. This square contains the two best hotels in the city, the Hôtel du Caucase and the Hôtel de l'Europe. We put up at the Hôtel du Caucase, and were favourably impressed by its cleanliness and by its *cuisine*. The prices were truly Caucasian; that is to say, the charges were considerably higher than those made at the best hotels in Switzerland, although they were not so extortionate as those demanded in Kutais, at the Hôtel de France et de la Colchide. An Englishman has suggested that that hotel should bear the sign of the 'Colchis Harpy.'

Europe ceases at the 'Place du Théâtre.' A few paces further on we are in Asia, for we come to the bazaar, the centre of Oriental life. Unlike the bazaars in larger Persian or Turkish cities, it is not a complex of halls with vaulted roofs interwoven with one another, or at least protected by mats against the sun, but simply an entangled mass of narrow lanes and low houses, the fronts of which serve both as shops and as places for the workmen. The show-window is dis-

pensed with, as everything on sale within is either hung up for exhibition or placed away on shelves. If the bazaar cannot be compared with the splendid marble courts of Damascus or the countless vaulted halls of Bagdad and Tubreez, it is at least not inferior to them in many interesting points of detail. First, the ever-changing life and activity of the different tribes. The astute Armenian, lord of the entire trade of the Caucasus, frequently dressed in European costume; the jovial and half-tipsy face of the Grusinian; the Tartar, with his red beard and huge conical cap; the tall, lank Persian, whose black kullah makes him appear a foot taller still, generally clad in the abbâ, of a yellowish-brown colour, and reaching down to the palm of the hands. These are the chief types amongst the busy throng. Intermingled with these may be noticed a multitude of wild-looking people: Ossetes, from the neighbouring mountains; small, thick-set Tuschs, distinguishable by their felt caps; Lesghies, with sharply-cut features and bold aquiline noses; and, as a contrast to the above, the German colonist, dressed in his old-fashioned costume, and with his peculiar cart and harness. As a matter of course, Russian uniforms and European frock-coats are also to be seen. From sunrise to sunset, the hot hours of the day excepted, this motley crowd is pushing and striving, bargaining and haggling; and to a new arrival it is quite incomprehensible how trade can be carried on amidst such confusion and noise. From intercourse with foreigners the Eastern merchant has lost a great portion of the

reserve which formerly was a peculiarity of his character. Although in Persia the seller never demeans himself by forcing his goods upon strangers, or by urging the latter to purchase them, in Tiflis Europeans are frequently beset by goldsmiths and swordsmiths, pressing importunately the sale of their wares. Naturally the inexperienced traveller is most unmercifully imposed upon by the Oriental merchant; and he will do well not to effect any purchases without the assistance of competent advice; and above all things he should be careful to avoid letting it be noticed that he is struck by the sight of any particular object, otherwise he will be immediately charged three times the value of the article.

The goods met with in the bazaar are of the most varied kinds. The European purchaser finds his choice facilitated by the circumstance that in Asiatic towns each branch of trade has a district to itself; thus the traveller enters the street of the goldsmiths, after which that of the swordsmiths; and so on. Goldsmiths have always been in high repute throughout the Caucasus. In Grusia this branch of industry has, in consequence of the chivalrous nature of the people and of their love for wine, developed itself in the manufacture of drinking-cups and arms. The former have most remarkable shapes: the hazarpesch (literally the thousand wonders), a kind of ladle with straight handle, the bowl of which contains a quarter-tungh (a tungh containing five bottles), and which, in accordance with the good old custom, must be emptied at one draught;

the kullah, in the form of a small lute, the handle of which, serving both as an instrument for pouring out wine and as a mouthpiece, is suspended from the girdle by a hook, and answers the purpose of a travelling-flask; also curious jugs with spiral necks; and finally drinking-horns and goblets of every description. In the manufacture of arms a speciality has arisen which the goldsmiths have brought to high perfection: this is the niello silver-work. The handles of the schaschka and of the kindshal, the clasps of the girdles, the cartridge-pouches and the various necessories which belong to the costume, are ornamented with it. Amongst peasants I have even met with specimens which for delicacy of design and beauty of execution would reflect high credit on any European goldsmith. The manufacture of raw steel, unfortunately, does not stand upon its former footing. The cheap Solingen goods have occasioned too serious a competition, and the foreign purchaser will do well to convince himself by careful examination that the so-called ancient blades, offered to him at ridiculously low prices, do not bear the impression of a German trade-mark. Notwithstanding this, other places in the Caucasus, as, for instance, Vladikawkas and some villages in Daghestan, produce very important specimens of swordsmith industry. In Kubatschi, one of the latter villages, in the district of Dargò (not to be confounded with Dargo in the Tschetschnia), the art of damaskeening (gold enamelling on steel) has been preserved in high perfection. There is one great drawback to foreigners in the

purchase of arms: the swordsmith who sells the new blade, is unprovided with either hilt or sheath, and before these articles can be obtained of the leather merchant and of the goldsmith much time is lost, and the purchaser has leisure to exercise his patience. Amongst the numerous other wares to be found in the bazaar, Persian carpets, embroideries, and similar merchandise will principally attract the notice of travellers. Foreigners desirous to purchase carpets will do well to visit the shops in the Russian quarter, as they contain a larger assortment of goods; in the first place, they will not be imposed upon to the same degree as in the bazaar, and they will find better articles. Carpets are generally brought from Persia; but inferior specimens, although remarkable productions in comparison with European manufacture, come from the Government of Bakû and from Nuchâ. The latter town produces, in competition with Resht, in Persia, those neat silk-embroidered handkerchiefs which in quality far surpass the productions of Constantinople, Broussa, and Damascus. Plushes of very pleasing patterns made into cushions for divans, called mutaka, are also manufactured there. I did not find later on in Tabreez a more complete collection of Persian and Caucasian goods than was shown to me by an Armenian merchant not far from the office of the General Staff, and I therefore recommend travellers to make their purchases at Tiflis; the prices are undoubtedly higher, but the extensive collection of merchandise, and above all the convenience of more easy, safe, and economical trans-

port to Europe, sufficiently outweigh this disadvantage. Amongst other productions likely to interest the traveller should not be omitted the numerous packing appliances employed in the East, and which are described in the last chapter. Leather-work manufactured in the Caucasus also deserves notice, especially some very durable and flexible straps, with the seam in the middle, very serviceable for bridles. The most remarkable bargain which I made at the bazaar was a sixteen-antlered stag's head of very unusual size, which I purchased from an Armenian for a trifle.

At the extremity of the bazaar lies a very remarkable old Grusinian church, tastefully restored by the Russian Government in accordance with Byzantine models. Not far from it are the hot springs to which Tiflis owes its name, and possibly its existence. The town was formerly called Tbilis-Kalaki, signifying hot city, a name which, philologically speaking, resembles the Sclavonic Teplitz. But I am not aware if any attempt has been made to trace an affinity between the Kartalinian language and the Aryan race. The springs, which are abundantly supplied with water and are of high temperature, are used as baths. Here will be found the so-called Turkish baths, arranged with comfort and luxury, very enjoyable after the hardships of a journey in the Caucasus, and which, if used in moderation, are invigorating. Almost at the extremity of the town is another spot, where strangers, released from the busy turmoil of the city and its hot dust, can enjoy fragrant repose. This is the Botanical Garden. Con-

cealed behind projecting rocks, upon which are situated the ruins of the old castle, it only betrays its charms to those who penetrate within its precincts. This resort, at a few minutes' walk from the bazaar, offers rest and tranquillity, and, thanks to a tiny cataract, the waters of which are carefully utilised, verdure and a refreshing atmosphere. Those who do not fear the exertion of ascending as far as the walls, which, commencing from the ruins, surround the gardens, will be repaid by a view of Mount Kasbek, the icy summit of which, invisible from the town, is from here seen to tower above the mountains in the foreground.

Those portions of the city which lie on the left bank of the Kura present fewer points of interest. Opposite the bazaar are some insignificant Grusinian quarters, above which may be seen a little church, grey with age, built above the stream on a steep rock, and looking down upon the busy throng below and the foaming eddies of the Kura. On the far side of the upper bridge is the statue of Prince Worontzoff, a former Lieutenant of the Caucasus, to whom the town stands much indebted. This is the same Prince Worontzoff so well known in the Crimea. From this point Russian roads lead to the upper extremity of the town, where a new sight presents itself; this is a broad alley flanked by pleasant habitations and neatly kept gardens, extending for a distance of nearly two miles. It forms the German colony originally founded about the year 1820 by emigrants from Wurtemberg. Whilst there are German villages scattered over the country,

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the inhabitants of which devote themselves exclusively to the cultivation of the soil, in German Tiflis only artisans have settled down, who, owing to their skill and diligence, are all in a very prosperous condition. In 1865 these latter amounted in number to 600 souls. That a colony such as this should exist without a brewery would, indeed, be an anomaly, and the produce of the one at Tiflis enjoys high favour not only with Germans but also with Russians and Grusinians. Even the Armenian Archimandrite who received us in Etchmiadzin would willingly have cast off for a time his ecclesiastical dignity and ceased to imbibe the heavy insipid wine of the country in order to renew the pleasures of his former student's life in Tiflis, and to enjoy once more those jovial evenings in the 'Beer-Garten.' We too whiled away here some pleasant hours in the company of our countrymen, and might have fancied ourselves back in Germany, had not the unaccustomed strains of Grusinian musicians recalled to us the East. The trio, which consisted of a clarionet, guitar, and tambourine, would have rent a rock in twain; for whilst the two latter instruments kept up a monotonous accompaniment, the clarionet performed a squeaking melody without head or tail. The special talent of the latter performer consisted in taking breath through his nose whilst he continued to blow through his mouth, a feat which, as we were assured by a German kapellmeister who happened to be present, could not be accomplished by any European musician. There still remains to be noticed beyond the German

Colony the Poti railway station and a public garden, founded by a Muschtehid (a high dignitary of the church), who had been banished from Persia, and called after him. In the evening this garden during spring is the rendezvous of Tiflis society; the heat had, however, driven everyone to the mountains, and not a soul was to be seen. Kadshory, distant about five miles south-west of the town, is a favourite summer resort; a great many persons, however, retire to Borshom or to Abastuman. Up to the present time Kachetia, which lies close by, and which possesses such magnificent scenery, has been entirely overlooked by the Russians.

Our eight days' stay in Tiflis passed away very agreeably, notwithstanding the heat. We found in Herr Bolton, our Consul *ad interim*, a very obliging and experienced adviser; and Michel, his office messenger, well known to every German in Tiflis, was of invaluable assistance to us in all our purchases. Messieurs Siemens Brothers (the Berlin firm is Siemens and Halske), represent important interests in the country, partly in consequence of the Anglo-Indian telegraph, which they constructed, and which runs over Trans-Caucasia for a distance of nearly 500 miles, and partly through the copper mines of Kedabeg, situated in the valley of the Schamkor, in Little Caucasus, north of Lake Goktscha. Two of the Brothers Siemens, who both had occupied the position of Consul for Prussia, and practically for Germany, died within the last few years, and Herr Bolton was the actual representative of the firm. In the meantime the Consulate, which formerly was an

honorary office, had been converted into a regular Consulate, to which Herr Brüning, formerly Vice-Consul at Alexandria, was appointed. We here encountered an unexpected check with regard to our future travelling plans. It cost us much trouble to obtain information respecting the means of communication in the north-west of Persia, and no one was able to tell us in what manner and by what route we could proceed from Tabreez to the Tigris. A visit to the Persian Consul-General served to enlighten us on the subject. We there learnt that a caravan-track would take us in seven days from Astara, on the Caspian Sea, to Tabreez, passing by Ardebil, and that we could also count upon finding a road from there to Mossoul. We formed our plans in accordance with this intelligence, and decided to make an excursion from Tiflis into Kachetia; then returning to the main road, to cross the pass of Kasbek; thence to traverse a portion of the Tschetschnia and of Northern Daghestan, finally reaching Petrowsk, on the Caspian Sea. From Petrowsk we proposed to go by steamer to Lenkoran, passing Derbend and Bakû, thence by land to Tabreez, and subsequently to cross the Turkish frontier. Two portions of the Caucasus could not, unfortunately, be included in this route; firstly, the districts of Nuchà and Schemachà, with Leghistan, the southern declivity of the main chain, described as being very beautiful; and, secondly, the so-called Karabagh, the south-east portion of Little Caucasus, a region of which Petzholdt speaks in terms of high admiration. We abandoned on account of the

heat, our intention of visiting Gori and the ruins of Uphlis-Tziche. We did not, however, consider this so great a sacrifice, as we had been assured on most competent authority that this city of caverns is far less interesting than Wardzia, which we had already visited. Those who purpose to make a longer stay at Tiflis should not neglect to make this excursion, which is easy to accomplish, on account of the railway, and there are other spots in the neighbourhood worth seeing; amongst these the monastery of St. David, situated almost immediately above the town, and possessing a beautiful view; and the monastery of Martkobi, a celebrated shrine, resorted to by pilgrims, some distance to the north-east. The sportsman will find in the Karajaz, the Kura steppe below Tiflis, every species of game.

The last days of our stay at Tiflis were devoted to necessary preparations. Trifles which would almost be looked down upon in Europe became here matters of great importance. The arrangement of our box of preserved food and the filling up of our huge wineskin were to us events, the beneficial results of which we had ample occasion to appreciate later on in Persia. The division of our journey into stages necessitated many a visit to the central departments, in order that they might send notice of our approaching arrival to the different local authorities. At last everything was packed up, all the necessary papers obtained, photographs purchased, of which there was a large supply at hand, and which served as foundation for an album; and on the morning of September 28 we were once

more able to seat ourselves upon the abominable telega which was to bring us again to the mountains. In order to be encumbered as little as possible during our excursion to Kachetia we sent on Ali direct to the post-station Ananur, south of the Kasbek pass, with all the baggage.

The precaution of having our arrival notified beforehand at the different post-stations had not been in vain. Horses and escorts stood ready for us, and the vexatious delays which invariably occur were thus reduced to a minimum; we, however, on each occasion declined the escort with thanks. The route which we followed to the valley of the Jora was desolate beyond description; it leads across the low, barren chain of hills which bound on the north the valley of the Kura, and, like the road to Erivan, on the other side of the river, was completely lined with carcases of horses. As we descended into the valley of the Jora, a tiny affluent of the Kura, rising in the country of the Chewsurs, the scenery became transformed as if by enchantment. Before us lay a pleasant village shaded by trees, in the midst of cultivated fields and irrigated meadows and gardens: this is the German colony Marienfeld, with its sister-colonies Petersdorf and Freudenthal. The colonists in this district and in the other German villages of the Caucasus are natives of Wurtemberg, who during the wars of liberty (1812–1815) deserted their fatherland from religious exaltation, and to whom the Government allotted tracts of land north and south of the main chain. The number of colonies in Cis-Caucasia is

six, with a population of 1,500 souls (1865); and there are nine colonies in Trans-Caucasia, with 3,400 settlers. Besides the above-mentioned villages the latter colonies comprise Alexanderdorf, not far from Tiflis, to the northward; Elisabeththal, Katharinenfeld, and Alexanderhülfe, south-west of the city; Annenfeld and Helenenthal, close to Jelissawetpol (Gündsha), the colony of artisans in the suburb of Tiflis not being included. The general condition of these colonies may be described as extremely prosperous; the settlers are popular throughout the country, on account of their diligence and honesty, and they are chiefly in thriving circumstances. Petzholdt, who visited the greater portions of these colonies, and from whom I borrow these details, gives the preference to Katharinenfeld as regards agriculture and the outward appearance of the village. Vines, too, are also extensively cultivated, and the juice of the grape is made to undergo a more civilised process than that employed by the inhabitants of the country, who seem to aim at extracting an unpalatable beverage from the best grapes. Petzholdt only notices the existence of one evil, which consists in the complete seclusion of the settlers, not only with reference to their Grusinian and Tartar neighbours, but even as regards their fatherland. Thus the chief object of colonisation is lost, namely, the improvement of native agriculture by the good example of colonists, and the character of these latter becomes deteriorated by the absence of a constantly reinvigorating home influence. There are even instances where they have

given up their good old Brabant ploughs to adopt the primitive implements in use amongst the Grusinians; their cattle, too, will soon scarcely be superior to the Caucasian. The Mennonite settlers on the Molotschna, in South Russia, acted very differently. By keeping up business relations with Germany they made great progress in agriculture, and especially directed their attention to improving the breed of native cattle by the importation of bulls. That they have been no bad instructors to their neighbours is proved by the case of the Malakans and Duchobortzs, who subsequently were removed to the Caucasus; for these latter stand far higher as regards agriculture than other Russian settlers, and the Duchobortzs have even adopted the German dress.

From Marienfeld we might have taken a shorter route to Telaw, the chief place of Upper Kachetia, by turning off to the north and riding across the mountain chain at Gambori, between the rivers Jora and Alazan, a road which was represented to us as being very picturesque. We preferred, however, pursuing our journey along the dreary, hot, and dusty post-road, in order to visit Signach and Lower Kachetia. The drive in the afternoon was real torture, our only consolation being derived from the fact that we were not delayed at the stations or annoyed by the conduct of the postmasters. We were in consequence truly rejoiced when at sunset we reached the heights above the valley of the Alazan, and drove into the town of Signach, proudly situated on a projecting rock. As no one seemed

to expect our arrival we proceeded to a small inn, and hardly had we got out of the telega when we were invited by the assistant of Prince Tumanow, the police-master, to pass the night at the house of a Mr. Saparow, an Armenian merchant, which invitation we gladly accepted. Our short stay in this hospitable house was rendered more agreeable by the circumstance that Mr. Karabegoff, the nephew of our host and representative of his business at Marseilles, spoke French fluently, and my travelling companions, who were unacquainted with the Russian language, were thus enabled to take part in the conversation. We heard very interesting details respecting the culture of silkworms, the centre of which industry is at Nuchà, and the brisk trade with France and Italy resulting from it; and we also listened, somewhat with feelings of regret, to accounts of the good sport to be obtained in the adjacent forests of Leghistan. We felt rather disappointed at seeing in the very heart of the Caucasian wine district an excellent bottle of Marcobrunner produced at supper as an especial compliment to ourselves. That after a seventy miles' drive in a telega through heat and dust we should softly fall asleep upon the splendid Persian carpets of the house will hardly create surprise.

Before leaving the next morning we had an opportunity to admire the splendid position of the town. Situated some thousand feet above the valley, it looks down upon the lovely landscape extending along the range of hills between the Jora and the Alazan, with

their numerous villages and well-cultivated fields and vineyards, on the far side of the river; upon dense forests, and, immediately rising out of the latter, upon the main chain of the Caucasus. The main chain rather disappointed me. Far from presenting a great variety of forms, as in Swanethia, it has here the appearance of an immense uniform wall, with a few prominent peaks slightly covered with snow. The town of Signach, with its 5,000 inhabitants, resembles any other Grusinian town, and offers no object worthy of notice; still on the evening of our arrival it was full of animation. Near to the town lies a large space of ground enclosed by walls, and, with the exception of a small church, quite empty, which a former king of Grusia and Kachetia intended to employ as a place of refuge for his subjects against the plundering excursions of the Lesghies. Our route, a newly constructed road, descended by numerous zigzags into the valley of the Alazan, and continued along the ridge of hills through villages lying so close together that during a drive of forty miles to Telaw we passed almost continuously between farms. In the course of our journey I never saw more pleasing villages than these; with their vineyards and nut trees they vividly recalled Upper Italy. The type of men was remarkably handsome; and as both sexes, clad in their best garments, were enjoying their Sunday in the open, the road presented a succession of picturesque sights. At a short distance from Telaw we were met by a Grusinian prince, sergeant of militia, who was to conduct us to the district chief. He was the

first of a long line of princes, of whom we were shortly to make the acquaintance, and who were nearly as numerous as the chickens which we had to eat. I may here make the remark that there is no dish of which the palate so easily wearies as chicken; and that even Europeans, after a short stay in the fowl-producing districts of Grusia and Kachetia, view with greedy eyes the first Tartar mutton.

Telaw is a country village, and had to-day a holiday appearance, the public spots and gardens being full of people celebrating the Sabbath with music and dancing. On other occasions, as we were assured by Mr. Green, the district chief, who received us most kindly, the place is insupportably dull; so much so that he and his family earnestly yearned after Irbit, his former post, a very small town in West Siberia, politically belonging to the Government of Perm, and celebrated for a fair held there once a year. To our regret we only learnt here for the first time that a popular festival recurring every year had taken place a few days previously at the monastery of Allahwerdi, resorted to not only by Kachetians but also by pilgrims, clad in various costumes, from the neighbouring Christian tribes of the Tuschs, the Pschaws, and the Chewsurs. Had we been aware of it sooner we might easily have made an excursion from Tiflis, and thus have witnessed one of the most picturesque festivals in the Caucasus. With silent envy we again listened to accounts of the abundance of game in the forests across the Alazan. Stags, bears, and wild goats are frequently, and leopards

occasionally, to be met with; I had myself on the way noticed pheasants in the vineyards.

Not far from Telaw lies Tzinondali, a castle belonging to the princely family of the Tchawtchawadze, which has possessions in Kachetia, and is famous for the carrying off of the princesses, in the year 1854. In the summer of that year a horde of Lesghies unexpectedly broke down from the mountains, crossed the Alazan—an event which had not taken place for centuries—and fell upon the defenceless family, whose head, but a few hours before, had been leading a detachment of Russian troops against other rebels in the neighbourhood of the castle. The Princesses Tchawtchawadze and Orbeliani were seized, together with their children, some of whom fell victims to the bloodthirsty Lesghies, and were carried off into Daghestan, to Schamyl, by whom they were held in captivity, but not badly treated. Mdlle. Drançay, a French governess, shared their fate. Schamyl, in ordering this savage outrage to be committed, appears to have been solely actuated by considerations of money, for he demanded in exchange for the ladies, in addition to the release of his son Dshemaleddin, taken prisoner some years previously by the Russians and by them educated at St. Petersburg, an entire cartload (arba) of gold. Later on he modified these conditions to 100 papachs of silver (no insignificant sum, considering the size of that head-covering), and finally he diminished his terms to 40,000 roubles. The exchange took place in the course of the following spring; but Schamyl had ill-calculated the final results

of the expedition, for this savage act of violence gave a new impulse to complaints being made respecting disorders in Daghestan, and was one of the chief incitements to an energetic resumption of hostilities on the part of the Russians. Five years later, after the capture of Weden, Schamyl was a fugitive, and with the storming of Gunib, in 1859, his kingdom fell to pieces. The whole of this romantic episode has not only been described most attractively by Dumas, but, contrary to that author's usual habit, accurately and with truth. He must have had recourse to good authorities.

The family Tchawtchawadze has the great merit of having done much to improve the cultivation of wine in Kachetia, and of having directed their attention to a better process of preparing the wine. Not only do the best Kachetian grapes grow in their estates at Tiznondali, Kwareli, and in other districts, but the produce is the only one that will bear bottling, with the exception of the wine belonging to a few other landed proprietors and also to a German establishment. This wine will not, apparently, bear transport, for some of it which I had sent to me to Germany was spoilt a few months after its arrival. Wine-culture in the Caucasus is still very little advanced; the above-mentioned proprietors excepted, the rest care little about the quality of their wines. No steps are taken to improve the condition of the grapes; the vines are not pruned, nor are the weeds hoed up; and, worst of all, the vineyards are watered, in order to increase the quantity of the wine. The juice of the grape undergoes no better

treatment than the grape itself; it is poured into huge earthenware jugs (kufshin), buried in the ground, and allowed to ferment together with all the dirt which falls into these neglected vessels. The process of refining hardly ever takes place; and if it is occasionally gone through, the straining is not performed by means of a syphon (the employment of which would be impracticable in the case of jugs buried in the ground), but by means of long-handled scoops, the result of which is that the wine and the yeast are stirred up together. The kufshins are frequently of enormous size, and are masterpieces of the potter's art. The largest, measuring eight feet in height, and proportionately wide, contain as much as 6,000 bottles, and cost from thirty to thirty-five roubles at the manufactory. They are not glazed, but are smeared over with melted beef-suet, to prevent their being porous. After the wine has undergone fermentation in the kufshin it is either immediately used (as I frequently saw done in Imeretia) or drawn off for transport into leather skins, from the huge buffalo-hides, containing 2,000 bottles, down to our modest goat's-skin, holding thirty bottles of best Kachetia, which we found very acceptable later on in Persia. Such a hide can scarcely be said to look very inviting; at a distance an arba with a buffalo's hide full of wine greatly resembles a knacker's cart conveying a dead bullock. The wine, from conveyance in these hides, acquires a peculiarly acrid taste, caused by the naphtha with which the skin is rendered water-tight. In the long run, however, this flavour is not unpleasant; and this is the universal

opinion of all connoisseurs of wine in the Caucasus, and is also the result of my own experience. Some persons maintain that wine having this flavour possesses hygienic properties, and that it acts as a preventive against the effects of intoxication, which is an undeniable advantage.

We were informed at Telaw that Prince Tcholochajew (in Grusinian, Tcholochachwilli), a landed proprietor, was desirous to entertain us as his guests, and half-way between Telaw and his property at Achmeti we were met by a troop of thirty horsemen, with a Prince Leonidze at their head, who escorted us to the house. In consequence of the narrowness of the road, which occasionally passed through woods, it frequently happened that some of the horsemen, who kept passing around our telega, fell with their horses into the ditch, thereby contributing to the general amusement. The last part of the journey we performed on horseback, and we arrived at Achmeti just as a heavy thunderstorm was commencing. Here we were received by the Prince, a former colonel of Cossacks, and by his brother, who spoke French fluently. Gradually a large company of gentlemen assembled, mostly relatives and guests of the host, almost all of whom were princes. Amongst others who arrived was a former Russian major, who had been stationed some time at Riga, but who had not picked up a word of German during his residence in that city. The evening passed off very merrily, and we had a second opportunity to complete our knowledge of the Caucasian 'Trink-comment,' into the mysteries of

which we had been initiated at Lailaschi. Although the host did not himself press his hospitality upon us immoderately (for which we felt grateful) the other guests were less merciful; still they had evidently underrated our capabilities, and even Prince Leonidze, the boldest amongst them, and perhaps the handsomest man we had seen in the Caucasus, was, to the surprise of everyone, entirely beaten out of the field in a drinking-match with one of my companions. The wine, which was home-made, was, moreover, light and palatable; it had not yet been poured into skins, and had consequently not acquired the naphtha flavour, and in taste somewhat resembled light Marsala wine. During dinner the Prince showed us a very interesting manuscript dating from the Middle Ages, and entitled 'The Panther's Skin.' The scene of action was laid during the flourishing period of the Kartalinian kingdom, probably during the reign of Queen Tamara, in the eleventh century. It was written upon beautiful fine hemp-paper in most exquisite Grusinian characters (*mchedruli*), and was adorned with arabesques and miniatures, denoting the work of an eminent artist. The portrait of Heraclius, the last King of Grusia, another heirloom, recalled to mind the cheap prints published by Gustav Kühn in Neu-Ruppin. The night was already far advanced when we spread out our travelling-beds on the divan of the saloon. These practical contrivances occasioned general amazement, especially in the case of the Riga major, whose crimson hue had warmed into the deepest purple.

It rained heavily the whole night, and the weather was beautifully cool in the morning. Our host had provided us good horses, and all the guests, with the exception of the major, who could not be found, together with a large retinue of servants, were there to escort us. At a short distance beyond Achmeti the valley of the Alazan closed, and we followed the course of the Ilto, a small tributary, passing through a beech forest finer than any that I had seen in Swanethia. The charm of the splendid scenery was enhanced by the melodious voices of our Grusinian companions, who sang together in parts with perfect intonation. This, too, was quite an unexpected treat, as our experiences of Grusinian music—putting the church-singing out of the question—had been neither soothing nor agreeable. We were of course called upon to sing in our turn, and the German 'Studenten Lieder' met here with the same success as a few weeks before at Lailaschi. I need scarcely add that our companions did not fail to execute some feats of horsemanship, and to display their address in mounting and dismounting at full gallop, picking up objects at the same time from the ground, performances which fully merited our applause. The range of hills which separates the valley of the Alazan from that of the Jora is not high, and before noon we saw Tioneti, a tiny village, situated in the broad valley of the Jora, rich in meadows, a view which reminded us of the Black Forest. The resemblance soon vanished as we alighted at the house of the Pristaw after a long gallop over the meadows and across the

Jora, for at the threshold lay a splendid wild-goat, just shot; and standing about the courtyard were some wild-looking figures clad in coats of mail, with sword and shield. These were Chewsurs, from the neighbouring mountains, who had been sent for by the Pristaw to escort us further. This extraordinary tribe, which scarcely numbers 5,000 souls, inhabits the wild mountain chain to the north of Tioneti, and lives principally upon the produce of the chase and also of their flocks. In appearance they are the most picturesque relic of the Middle Ages to be met with in the Caucasus; with their coats of mail, similar to the old Teutonic 'brünne'; with their helmets, consisting of a concave plate of iron with steel rings, protecting the face and neck, with interstices for the eyes; with their small round shields tipped with iron, resembling the Teutonic 'tartsche;' with their armlets and greaves, the Chewsurs recal to mind the heroes of the Crusades. To this must be added the coat of black woollen material reaching down to the knee, and adorned with small red crosses sewn on over the breast, the shoulders, and the sleeves. Mention was made of a white coat of similar description, with black crosses, but I did not see one. It has been supposed, on account of this costume, and also from the circumstance that the Chewsurs, in common with the neighbouring Pschaws and Tuschs, have from the earliest times been Christians, that they are descended from Crusaders who had been scattered about Asia; but the fact that their language, like that of the Pschaws and Tuschs, is of Kartalinian origin,

is at variance with this conclusion. There is no room for the suggestion that they subsequently adopted this language, considering their isolated position in the midst of pathless mountain districts; and this deduction is rendered more evident by the fact that other dispersed remnants of tribes, such as the inhabitants of Kubatschi, in the district of Dargô, in Daghestan, and the Udi, in Leghistan, although possessing but few villages, have preserved their own peculiar language. The warlike games of the Chewsurs, given in our honour, were very animated, and the combatants seemed very indifferent if a blow badly parried with the shield drew blood. In their mode of fighting with the sabre, they followed in many respects the German system, and displayed great skill. An instrument which they carried, and which I never noticed elsewhere in the Caucasus, although I have seen it in Upper Bavaria, is the 'schlag ring,' a piece of iron, worn on the right thumb, and furnished with sharp-pointed teeth, the effects of which are merciless.

After we had looked on for some hours at this spectacle, and had been entertained by the Pristaw with trout not inferior to those of the Black Forest, fresh horses arrived to convey us to Ananûr. The Chewsurs composed our escort as far as the boundaries of the district, which were close at hand, and from there we continued our journey attended by Cossacks. The forest scenery of the pass, leading down to the valley of the Aragwa, was again magnificent; but the country was more open, and the foliage somewhat

burnt by the sun. Immediately below the watershed lay a ruined chapel, underneath which the waters of a tiny streamlet had formed a pool, the whole presenting a lovely picture. We reached the valley at a point where the two principal tributaries of the Aragwa unite; the route leads to the pass of Kasbek through the valley of the western affluent, and further on through a side-valley to the pass of Buslatschir, which lies 200 feet lower down than the former but is not practicable for travellers; it is also possible to reach Vladikawkas on horseback by difficult mountain paths through the valley of the eastern affluent, as well as by the valley of the Jora. A ride of a few versts along the pleasant valley of the Aragwa brought us to Ananûr, upon the great Grusinian military road. This road, which comes from Tiflis by Mtzchet through the valleys of the Kura and of the Aragwa, leaves the latter valley for a short distance in order to pass through the town of Duschet. Ananûr possesses a castle which in the middle ages must have served to close up the valley, for the walls, which surround several churches, run some distance up the mountain, the whole offering a most romantic aspect. The post-station at Ananûr, like most stations on the main road, possesses tolerable accommodation, although wooden benches, with bolsters made of wood for pillows, supply the places of beds—a preferable arrangement as regards cleanliness. Ali had arrived the previous day with the baggage, and that menial gave us to understand that our mode of travelling without attendants was detrimental to

our dignity, and that, in consequence, he felt his own position compromised.

The next morning at daybreak we found ourselves again seated in the abominable telega. The weather was fresh and beautiful, and the road in such good condition that we soon got over the long stage to Passanaûr. Here the favourable impression produced by the sight of a clean recently-built post-station was immediately dispelled by the aspect of a brand-new Russian church; and so great a departure had been made from taste that a whitewashed church, with five light-green cupolas, as is frequently seen in Russia, had been erected in the midst of this romantic spot, rich in venerable Grusinian edifices. In the plains of Russia such buildings light up the surrounding scenery, but here the mountains on all sides look down with amazement at the extraordinary innovation. As far as Mleti, the next station, the road continues in the valley on the right bank of the Aragwa; further on it crosses the river, and ascends a height of 2,000 feet over a precipitous incline, by means of ingenious zig-zags, until it reaches Gudaûr, a station situated at an altitude of 7,200 feet. The view from the road of the basin of the Aragwa is grand, and not inferior to the scenery of any Alpine pass. The slopes were cultivated, wherever it was possible to do so, and upon the less steep tracts of arable land could be seen in full activity the coarse native plough, with its lengthy team of sixteen oxen and buffaloes, yoked together in couples. Upon the more steep fields this could not be effected,

and there the produce of the harvest, as well as the hay, had to be brought down into the valley upon slides, for frequently the incline scarcely affords safe footing for horses. We saw many of these sledges gliding down the slopes with their loads, whilst men, in front, strove to stem the rapidity of the descent. Even in spots where cultivation appeared impossible the grooves in the ground showed that the soil was being made use of, if only for the purpose of gathering in the wild hay. I have, however, seen in the Italian Tyrol a still further utilisation of mountain declivities; there a wire-rope is extended from an apparently inaccessible rock down into the valley, and along it loads of hay come whistling to the bottom. At some distance from the station of Gudaûr we saw, to our dismay, an eight-horsed vehicle driving ahead of us; and we felt that, if it arrived first, there would be no prospect for us of obtaining horses, as we had already in Mleti experienced difficulties about relays. The driver, true to his nature, refused to pass on in front of the ponderous monster, and there remained nothing else to be done but to get down, and, by running up steep footpaths, to steal a march on our rivals. The attempt succeeded, and, by a display of energy on my part, the post-master was induced to promise us at least one troika instead of the two which had already been paid for beforehand. The *menu* of the station was not very extensive, consisting of buffalo-bouillon and preserved currants. Travellers, who at an altitude of 7,200 feet generally find their appetites improved,

are compelled to absorb large quantities of these ingredients to satisfy the cravings of hunger.

The post-master kept his word, and even gave us his best troika, consisting of three fine black horses, to which the telega appeared a mere plaything. The roads ascends another thousand feet over barren stony precipices, and reaches the watershed between the Kura and the Terek at a point situated on the Mountain of the Cross 7,977 feet in height. This mountain is so called from a cross erected on the completion of the road, and it appears more correct to give the same name to the pass, although it is more generally designated the Pass of Kasbek, after the mountain which is situated nearly five miles from the road and fourteen from the watershed. There is, however, no reason for calling it the Pass of Dariel, as the short defile which bears that name lies far beneath the pass level, and close to the plain: it would be just as correct to designate the Splügen the pass of Via Mala. The view from the height had been represented as being magnificent; I felt, in consequence, somewhat disappointed on perceiving that projecting mountains shut out all view to the north, and that to the south only the upper portion of the valley of the Aragwa was visible. Our swift, powerful horses passed at a smart trot round the sharp turnings by which the road descended into the valley of the Terek, and we had enough to do to keep our seats in the telega. At the station of Kobi we reached the foot of the valley, situated 6,500 feet above the level of the sea, a swampy spot but very pictu-

DUCHAN AT THE KHOORD PASS.

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resque, overflowed by the Terek, coming from the north-west, and watering the ramifications of the Kasbek, which latter mountain is not visible from Kobi. To the right, immediately above the station, rose up a rock of basalt, the broken columns of which, lying horizontally upon the ground, resembled a huge honeycomb. The post-master at Kobi was in a state of intoxication; according to Freshfield's testimony he appears to have been formerly in that condition, and it must be presumed that the dreary and desolate nature of the place produces a very depressing effect upon the human system. We witnessed here a very primitive method of shoeing horses; the poor beast, with the hinder quarters hoisted in the air, was, by means of a broad band wound round the belly, slung up to a frame, upon which the blacksmith sat and continued his work leisurely. Another method of shoeing horses, frequently employed in the East, consists in tying together the four hoofs of the animal and throwing it on its side; a layer of straw is, however, placed underneath, to prevent the horse being injured by the fall. There was no necessity for prolonging our stay at this very uninviting spot, more especially as Kasbek, the next station, was reputed to possess beds—a very desirable luxury; we therefore continued our journey during dusk. The valley of the Terek became narrower, and upon steep precipices the villages of the Ossetes rose up, with their towers crowned with battlements. Sion, the largest of these villages, looks down upon the valley like a huge castle. The dark, fearful

mountain heights on both sides, the foaming Terek beneath the road, presented in the obscurity a wild spectacle of grandeur; and we were close to the station, where we arrived just before nightfall, before the valley opened out again. The post-station did not belie its reputation; we obtained not only good beds but also a hot supper.

A splendid view awaited us the following morning. Whilst the valley was still enveloped in darkness the snowy summit of the Kasbek, dimmed by no clouds, looked down upon us with its leaden hue, peculiar to snow-mountains at sunrise. Its grandeur consists less in its form than in the frame which surrounds it. Steep mountain walls enclose the valley of the Ortzwiri, a glacier stream, and between them is seen, towering above everything and without a rival, the lofty cone, 16,546 feet in height. Besides the village of Kasbek—from which the mountain has borrowed the name employed by the Russians (the Grusinian name being Mkinwari)—there is only one other point, a few versts further down in the valley of the Terek, from which this peak can be seen. Here it is again framed in, in a similar manner, by the rocky steeps of the Devdorak glacier. Many years ago the Devdorak glacier caused great havoc; as in the case of the Giétroz glacier in the Valais, it stemmed by a rapid rise the efflux of the waters, until the accumulated torrent burst through the obstacle and devastated the valley of the Terek. The Government sent commissioners to report upon the necessary measures for pre-

venting the recurrence of similar calamities, but before any decision had been arrived at the glacier fell back into its original bed. These reports, of which Freshfield gives some specimens, do not convey a very high notion of the knowledge possessed by Caucasian officials in respect to glacier formation. The Kasbek was, after some unsuccessful attempts made by Russian officers, pronounced to be impossible of ascent, until, within the last fifteen years, Freshfield, Moore, and Tucker, accompanied by François Devouassoud, a Chamounix guide, accomplished the feat, without encountering difficulties insuperable to experienced mountain-climbers. They ascended from the valley of the Ortzwiri glacier to the region of perpetual snow, spent the night on the south side of the mountain, and crossing over tolerably accessible ice-fields, reached the following morning the summit, whence they descended on the north side, and, passing through the valley of the Devdorak, returned to the station. The local guides were of no service whatsoever beyond acting as carriers as far as the snow-line; they refused to go any further. With the same guides a Russian from Tiflis accomplished the ascent in 1873; but notwithstanding the unfavourable state of the weather he did not encounter any difficulties worth mentioning. I have not heard of any other ascents of the Kasbek; but to travellers who have had experience in mountain climbing, and who are provided with the necessary requisites, the expedition has this recommendation: the starting-point lies close to the post-road, whilst the base of the

great mountains in Swanethia—with which, as regards grandeur, the Kasbek cannot bear the smallest comparison—is only reached after weeks of weary travelling.

The valley of the Terek is, down to the plain, inhabited by Ossetes, a mountain tribe which has particularly attracted the attention of ethnographers and philologists, and whose Arian origin is clearly demonstrated by the language, which is closely related to the Persian. Especially remarkable are, however, the numerous characteristic traits which denote an affinity with the Teutonic race; as, for instance, the shape of the house-utensils, differing from those used by other mountain tribes, many habits and customs, and finally the beer brewed by them; this latter, said to resemble porter, is called *ludi*, and is also prepared by the Chewsurs. Attempts have frequently been made, on the ground of these affinities, to trace back the origin of the Ossetes to tribes dispersed at the time of the Crusades; but erroneously, as their language points to a Medo-Persian source. They call themselves Iron, and are partly Mohamedans and partly Christians; but in many of their villages the inhabitants belonging to either persuasion are so lukewarm in their convictions that they might more properly be described as pagans. Notwithstanding occasional depredations on their part, the Ossetes have contrived to remain on good terms with Russian Government. This state of peaceful relations was of considerable importance to the latter, as an insurrection in the valley of the Terek would have para-

lised all intercourse between the countries situated on both sides of the mountain chain.

Below the station of Kasbek the valley narrows into a wild defile, from which a brief view of Mount Kasbek is obtained through the valley of the Devdorak; further on, the rocky walls approach so close to one another that hardly a passage remains for the road and for the foaming Terek, and the former soon enters the far-famed defile of Dariel. For a distance of nearly one mile the rocks rise up thousands of feet above the valley, and from the road the eye, glancing upwards, can only detect a small streak of blue sky above in the heavens; and it appears that, when the snow melts, the roaring of the Terek is terrible in its rocky bed below. The defile of Dariel far surpasses the Via Mala, at Graubünden, and deserves a high place amongst the beauties of nature in the Caucasus. At the extremity of the defile a Russian fort closes up the valley; and here, at the frontiers of the Government of Tiflis and of the country of the Terek Cossacks, the traveller is stopped and asked the very matter-of-fact question, if he has any tobacco to declare, which for us was an unexpected annoyance, as we had no conception that different methods of taxing tobacco existed in the north and in the south of the Caucasus. At Lars, a station not far distant, the valley opens out, and vegetation, of which higher up there had been no trace, again appears, and the road from this point descends very little. The valley of the Kistinka, entering here from the east, is inhabited by a Tchetchentz tribe, the first

sign that we are approaching the classic ground of Caucasian warfare. At Balta, the last station, we were refused horses, without any reasons being given for the refusal, and it was only after threatening to make a formal complaint to the Russian authorities that we succeeded in obtaining any. About noon we reached Vladikawkas.

The town very much resembles a provincial town in Russia: broad, straight streets, with low houses, in the centre a square, laid out in gardens, with the Government House, and a number of uniforms in the streets. The post-station serves as an inn, and rivals in price the 'Colchis Harpy' at Kutais; we were made to pay two and a half roubles for the space in the entrance-hall occupied by our rolled-up tent. Fortunately for future travellers a Greek was on the point of establishing a new hotel. The town is very poor in sights, and the bazaar offers nothing tempting to purchasers except, perhaps, some leather wares of excellent quality; with the best intentions we failed to discover any of the famous sword-blades or any silver work. General Prince Loris-Melikow, governor of the district of the Terek Cossacks, was unfortunately absent, a circumstance which we much regretted, as we knew from experience how favourable an impression was produced upon the minds of postmaster and postilions by an official notification of our intended arrival. Post-travelling affected us in an inverse ratio to other evils; for whilst we gradually accustomed ourselves to endure such hardships, as hunger, dirt, and vermin, each

successive morning we regarded the telega with increased horror. As the town offered few attractions, and as the view, in fine weather embracing a portion of the mountain chain, was dimmed with clouds, which meanwhile had gathered round the mountains, we had ample leisure to devote attention to our diaries, which since our departure from Tiflis had been sadly neglected.

All the accounts of wars in the Caucasus which have reached Europe, have been very obscure, and have almost resembled fairy tales. Stories were told of proud mountaineers who, inspired by the love of freedom and independence, disputed with the Russians, at the price of their blood, every inch of their native soil, and the poetical halo which hung around Schamyl had invested him with the character of a second Andreas Hofer. These views, coupled with a very deficient knowledge of the condition of mountain populations, of their divisions into nationalities, and of their dwelling-places, induced half Europe, during the time of the Crimean war, to believe that it only required a little more active assistance on the part of the Allies to have incited every man in the Caucasus to openly revolt and drive the Russians back into the steppes between the Sea of Azow and the Caspian. Great astonishment accordingly prevailed when, at no great interval after the Crimean war, the news reached Europe of the final subjugation and capture of Schamyl; and that the Caucasus, with the exception of a few small tribes dwelling in the western districts, whose

submission was subsequently received, had with one stroke been brought under the absolute dominion of Russia. This ignorance of the true state of affairs was the natural consequence of a want of literature on the subject. The Russian works only treated of individual expeditions, and were never seen by the West-European public; whilst the few accounts published by foreigners gave an erroneous representation of the events which had occurred, either from an imperfect knowledge of the country, or from the unreliability of the sources employed; as, for instance, Haxthausen's 'Trans-Caucasia,' or Dumas' 'Le Caucase,' the latter of whom had access to very good authorities. But all these books alike give romantic misrepresentations of the events which took place. The only exhaustive work which deals systematically with the history of Russian supremacy in the Caucasus, and which also gives a description of the country and of the population, is on the point of being published. It is Dubrowin's 'History of the War and of Russian Rule in the Caucasus;' St. Petersburg: Part I. 'Country and People,' 1871. Although a detailed narrative of these wars would be out of place, a short summary of the progress of these operations might not be inappropriate, and would serve to elucidate the following pages, which are descriptive of our journey through the region of former Caucasian warfare.

The Caucasus possessed two theatres of war, distinct both as regards locality and the nature of the contests. The one was called the right, and the other the left

wing, in accordance with the stand-point of the commander-in-chief at St. Petersburg. The right wing comprised the territory between the Black Sea and the Kouban, up to a line drawn from Elburz to Soukhum Kaleh, and included the several tribes of the Tscherkesse and Abkhasians; the left wing comprised the Eastern Caucasus, with the Terek as the northern boundary, and the valleys of the Alazan and of the Kura as the southern boundary, the Kouban khanate, the easternmost portion being, however, excepted. The hostile tribes on the left wing were those of the Tschetschentzes, and those of Daghestan. Between the two wings the mountain districts, and their borders, were inhabited by the Karatchai and Baksan Tartars, by Kabardians, Swanethians, Ossetes, Chewsurs, Pschaws, and Tuschs—populations which were either in alliance with the Russians, or at all events were not disposed hostilely towards them. The two wings, which at the nearest point were separated by an interval of 140 miles, never effected a combined movement, nor did any union exist between them. On one occasion Schamyl endeavoured to incite the Kabarda to revolt, and thereby to establish relations with the right wing; but the attempt entirely failed.

The contest, carried on by the Russians on the right wing, which terminated in 1864 by the subjugation of the last resisting elements, was nothing more than a series of single expeditions directed against the Tcherkesse (Adighé) and the Abkhasians, who never acted in concert. The object of these expeditions had

been either to suppress the depredations of robber tribes, or, by enforcement of taxation, to compel acknowledgment of the Imperial authority. From the character of the country between the Kouban and the main chain, which here does not attain any great elevation, the warfare was mere bush-fighting. The Cossack lines on the Kouban, and its tributaries, served as base of operations, as well as some advanced forts in the mountains, whilst from the Black Sea a row of coast forts operated to the south side of the main chain. Although no positive battles are to be recorded, still much blood was shed; for, as soon as it came to actual fighting, the bitterest exasperation prevailed on both sides. From the relative weakness of the individual hostile tribes, the right wing was apparently less endangered; and as soon as the situation became critical on the left wing, aggressive action ceased on the right, and all available troops were directed towards the east: to this circumstance may be ascribed the fact that the final subjugation of the west wing took place five years subsequent to that of the east wing. As previously mentioned, the Tscherkesse tribes, after 1864, to the number of 400,000 men, and the Abkhasians to a lesser amount, migrated to Turkey, and recently (1874) it was rumoured that the population remaining behind, which numbered about 60,000 men, were anxious, on account of the introduction of general military service into Russia, to follow the example of their companions, and eventually to perish from misery and starvation.

Very different was the state of warfare on the left wing. Different tribes occupied the Tschetschnià, which, although connected by similarity of language, were in hostility amongst themselves; the Russians had, therefore, an easy task to gain over some of these, and to use them as weapons against one another. The situation was similar in Daghestan, only with the difference that considerable tracts of land were united under princes, whilst all the Tschetschentz tribes had democratic institutions, and were each comparatively weak. Thus, about 1830, the Russians succeeded in a friendly manner, by treaties with several native princes, in acquiring influence in Daghestan and in establishing a series of fortresses, whilst the line of Cossack Stanitz maintained tranquillity in the Tschetschnià; and whatever fighting took place bore a purely local character. After 1830 this state of affairs changed suddenly. For years Mullah Mohamed, a fanatical priest, had preached the rising of the Moslems against unbelievers, and his words had aroused much sleeping rancour in the hearts of the people. His teaching not only had a political tendency, but was also directed to religious innovation. His design was to renovate, in the spirit of the founder, Islamism, which had from lapse of centuries declined and had been weakened by schisms, and a crusade waged against unbelievers was to operate as a means of infusing religious fervour. This movement, designated Muridism from the name Murid (meaning disciple or follower), borne by the initiated, constitutes one of the greatest events in the

modern history of Islamism; for, whilst laying aside the old dynastic dispute respecting the succession of the prophet, it aimed at bringing under the same standard both the Shee-ites and the Sunnites, an attempt which, since the death of the sons of Ali at Kerbela, no sect, except amongst pantheistic Sufis and, also perhaps to some extent, amongst the Wahabites in the south of Arabia, had ever dared to effect. A similar movement, entirely independent of Muridism, and having for its object the pristine purity of the church, arose some years later in Persia; this was the fantastic school of Bab. This prophet and his followers were exterminated in the most cruel manner by the Shah; but a spark still glows in Persia amongst the ashes of Babism, and it is not impossible that on the occasion of a change on the throne, or at a period of national disaster, the movement would again burst forth into flame. The growth of Muridism was to the Russians a matter of fearful import; for not only might it have resulted to them in the loss of Daghestan, but it was even to be feared that, should Islamism prove victorious, the movement might have extended to the Tartar race, not only in the Caucasus, but even in the south of Russia. The first to raise the standard of revolt was Kazi Mullah, a disciple of Mullah Mahomed. He succeeded, in 1831, in capturing some strongholds from the Russians, and in driving the latter from Daghestan at a time when a false rumour of a Persian invasion in the frontier provinces had drawn off the troops to the south. But his star soon sank to its nadir, for the following year he fell in

battle at the victorious storming of Himri by the Russians, near the junctions of the Andi and of the Avari Koissu. At his side his disciple Schamyl fell severely wounded, but escaped death and captivity in the most extraordinary manner. Hamzad Bey, a man of far less intelligence, succeeded Kazi Mullah. He could only by cruelty and deceit oppose the discord which reigned between the princes and the tribes of Daghestan, and in 1834 he fell a victim to blood-thirsty revenge in the mosque at Chunsak, in the khanate of Avaria, the reigning family of which he had dethroned and murdered.

Schamyl now rose at the head. The first period of his sway was not fortunate; his authority was disputed by Taschaw-Hadshi, and the ruler of Avaria, of the race of Khans murdered by Hamzad Bey, together with the avengers, openly went over to the Russians. By this Schamyl lost a great portion of the Avares, the ablest amongst all the mountain tribes which dwell in Northern Daghestan; and in 1837 he was compelled to submit and swear allegiance to the Emperor—an oath which, later on, did not heavily burden his conscience. In 1839 the Russians, in consequence of renewed disorders, again attacked Schamyl; but the terribly bloody assault of Achulgo, not far from Himri, when Schamyl, almost by a miracle, again escaped captivity, and the many victorious contests of the following year, brought no permanent advantage to the Russians. The power of Schamyl grew up upon the submission of Taschaw-Hadshi, and also from the secession to him of the Khan Hadshi-Murad of Avaria; and he emerged from

the wars of 1841 and 1842 unweakened, though frequently defeated. The two following years elapsed in comparative quiet; but in 1845 an important turning-point in the war intervened.

Prince Worontzoff, the recently appointed Imperial Lieutenant, perceived that the system hitherto pursued by the Russians was defective. Up to the present time isolated expeditions had penetrated into the heart of the country, and, in spite of numerous victories, had produced no lasting impression, the lines of retreat being too long, and the want of good roads preventing a permanent communication being kept open between single posts, the consequence of which was that insurrection broke out anew before the troops had barely left the country. Worontzoff conceived the plan of advancing the entire Russian lines slowly and steadily against the heart of Daghestan, and of stifling the revolt for ever in the centre. For a thorough comprehension of this plan a survey is necessary of the local configuration of the theatre of war. Daghestan and the Tschetschnià are entirely different; Daghestan forms a barren high plateau, intersected with wild crevices, and traversed by deeply penetrating valleys, whilst the slopes on the north border of this table land—the western portion of which is called the Little Tschetschnià and the eastern portion of which is called the Great Tschetschnià—are thickly interspersed with forests and brushwood. The actual mountainous portion is not many miles in extent; further to the north it runs into hilly regions, and finally reaches the steppe. In consequence

of this difference of terrain the chief bloodshed in the Tschetschnià arose from surprises and ambuscades, in both of which styles of warfare the Tschetschentzs are at home. In Daghestan the Russian troops were decimated by the storming of strongholds and by the assault of villages situated on inaccessible heights. At the commencement of the war the Russian line of operations in the North was the series of Cossack Stanitz on the Terek, from Kizljar to Mozdok. In the course of the war it was advanced to the mountain chain as far as the Sundsha. Along that river a line of stanitz was established from Vladikawkas to Groznaja, which then runs in an oblique direction across the steppe to the Caspian Sea. The wild range of mountains to the westward, inhabited by the friendly tribes of the Tuschs, Pschaws and Chewsurs, protected the Russians against incursions from the tribes of Daghestan, and to the southward the so-called Lesghies line extended along the valley of the Alazan to the district of Nuchà. The latter line was mainly of defensive character, for an attack coming from the main chain of the Caucasus was hardly probable. But eastward from the side of Nuchà, and in the Kouban khanate, little danger was to be apprehended, for the Lesghies tribes residing there were tolerably tranquil, and Schamyl concentrated his entire strength in Northern Daghestan. At Derbend, on the Caspian Sea, commenced anew some Russian defences, which to the northward were connected with the line of the Tschetschnià. The plan of Prince Worontzoff was above all to strengthen this line so as

to render any attempt to break through it impossible; after which, to penetrate by means of broad trenches into the Tschetschnià, protecting his troops by the clearing away of the forest against surprise and ambuscade; to draw a circle closer and closer around Schamyl, and by finally attacking him in his last haunt to render him harmless. Unfortunately this plan was thwarted in the first year of his lieutenantcy. By express command of the Emperor, and against his own convictions, he was compelled to undertake the fatal expedition against Dargo, Schamyl's strongest point of defence in the Tschetschnià. This stronghold, lying in the midst of inaccessible mountains and forests, was taken by storm; but on the return march the Russian army found itself hemmed in on all sides. The losses were frightful, and perhaps hardly a man would have survived, had not a Tschetschentz, who had remained true to the Russians, brought tidings of the disaster to General Freitag, stationed some thirty-three miles distant at Herzel-Aûl, who by a celebrated march relieved the remainder of the army. The consequences of this ill-fated expedition speedily followed. Not later than the following year, Schamyl broke through the line of the Sundsha, and penetrated into the Kabarda. But the attempt to gain over the tribes of the right wing proved abortive. During the remainder of his period of office (until 1854), Worontzoff consistently pursued his system, and he might even himself have led the final attack had not the Crimean war intervened to disturb the thread of his operations. Safe lines of

communication were established between single points; the Tschetschentz, inhabiting the districts lying in the rear of the line of attack, were, for the most part, permanently subjugated; and large spaces, over which a bullet would not carry, were cleared away amongst the dense beech forests to the southward of the line. The expeditions meanwhile undertaken in Daghestan did not certainly produce great results, but they brought a number of strongholds in the East into the hands of the Russians. Soon after the Crimean war, Woront-zoff's system bore fruit. Of the Tschetschnià only a small portion now remained true to Schamyl, and in Eastern and Southern Daghestan his influence was already on the wane. At last, in the winter of 1858–59, the Russians gained their first great victory; Weden, Schamyl's chief place in the Tschetschnià, was taken by storm, and he himself obliged to flee. For months he lay hid in a wild rocky ravine in the valley of the Andi Koissu, whilst one tribe after another submitted to the Russian yoke. In the following summer he gathered together the last remnant of his followers, and with them occupied Mount Gunib, between the Avari and the Kara Koissu, an apparently impregnable fastness. Here he was surrounded by the Russian army under Prince Bariatinski; and on August 25 (September 6, new style), at the storming of the stronghold, Schamyl was taken prisoner. The small town of Kaluga, south-west of Moscow, was assigned to him as a residence; he lived here in honourable captivity until, in 1868, the Emperor sanctioned his retirement to

Mecca, where he is said to have died recently, blind and well stricken in years.

Schamyl, born at Himri towards the close of the last century, was an extraordinarily highly-gifted man; but he was not the ideal character which so long he was represented to be. With undeniably great qualities—knowledge, quick perception, courage, and unbending energy—he combined all the faults of an Oriental despot. He was imperious and cruel; with terrible severity he oppressed the tribes under his subjection, and the smallest act of disobedience was punished with death. On more than one occasion did he violate the sanctity of an oath, and it is not improbable that his ascetic mode of life was intended to propagate his power and fame. At his fall the tribes of Daghestan breathed again, and willingly submitted themselves to Russian dominion, hardly feeling the yoke after the tyranny of Schamyl. Since that time the course of events encourages the hope that the present tranquillity will not be disturbed; if occasional acts of murder are committed, they are either the work of fanatics or have originated from personal revenge. No further insurrection has occurred, nor could it have had a prospect of success, for a network of roads has been completed; and the Russians, who are masters of all the strongholds in the country, are able in any place, and at any moment, to localise immediately and suppress the first symptom of revolt. As far as my experience serves to guide me, the inhabitants of Daghestan appear to recognise with gratitude the present state of

affairs, and by entering the Russian militia have frequently given proofs of a conciliatory disposition. It is, therefore, now more than probable that general military service, the last stumbling-block to many Mahomedan subjects of Russia, will be accepted by them without any very great difficulty. It is true that in the Tschetschniâ different Aûls followed the example of the Tscherkesse tribes, and migrated to Turkey; but they appear to be so ill at ease in their adopted home, that during my stay in the Caucasus frequent overtures had been made by them for reinstatement in their former territories.

Our departure from Vladikawkas was not very pleasant; it had rained the whole night, and we were apprehensive that the roads would be impassable; fortunately on the steppe, over which the roads lead to Groznaja, only so much rain had fallen as to lay the dust and render the road soft and agreeable. As our arrival was notified beforehand at all the stations along the route from Tiflis, we were able, without hesitation, to separate ourselves from our baggage; this was a matter of great satisfaction to us, as we understood that the roads in Daghestan were impracticable, and as the conveyance of the baggage over this mountainous terrain would have required many horses, and occasioned much annoyance and loss of time. At first our road trended due north into the steppe, then turning sharp to the east descended into the valley of the Sundsha; on the right was the woody Tschetschniâ, the mountains of which were enveloped in thick clouds,

on the left was a barren, desolate range of heights which, together with a parallel range, divided the valley of the Sundsha from that of the Terek. Beyond these heights, which are called Greben, lie on the Terek, the stanitz' of the Grebentzkoi-Cossacks, the most famous amongst the heroes of the Thirty Years' War of the Caucasus. On the way we first fell in with Tartar (or Kumyki) villages, in which for the first and last time I noticed camels in harness; to see this long-legged gigantic beast in a shaft before equally high wheels was a sight irresistibly comic. Later on we passed exclusively through Cossack stanitz, large fortified villages with ramparts and gateways, forming regular squares. When viewed near at hand, these defences do not appear quite so terrible; a ditch half filled in, and behind it an earth rampart, a little over a man's height, with quick-hedge displaying many a gap, the whole offering no greater resistance than a 'knick' (fence) in Holstein; at the time of the war they may possibly have been in better condition, and have proved sufficiently strong to resist an attack of Tschetschentz. The interior of the village was always neatly kept; and in the centre stood an open place, green and pleasant-looking, with a church. In the first stanitz we met with an unexpected increase to our travelling-society; a white-bearded venerable Cossack, clad in a red beschmet, with the St. George's cross on his breast, craved permission to travel with us. As we had two telegas and very little baggage we willingly granted his request, on the condition that he would

contrive to procure us speedy relays of horses at the post stations. He certainly did his utmost, but his best intentions failed in opposition to the passive resistance of the post-master, and to the slowness of the yamtschiks. At every station we incurred delays; on one occasion in the open our yamtschik, without a word of explanation, suddenly unharnessed one of the horses, mounted it, and disappeared in a trice over the horizon. Amazed we looked after his retreating form, and were bethinking ourselves of taking up our night quarters in the open air, when after a lapse of an hour he came back again. He had forgotten his whip, and had ridden back to the station to fetch this emblem of his dignity. The further we advanced, the more desolate the country became; on the Tschetschniâ side everything was wrapped in a grey mist, and the uniform chain of hills to our left did not help to enliven the landscape. The countless rows of Kurgans[1] which line the sides of the hills, and which I never again saw in so large a number, produced a peculiar, almost melancholy impression; they are met with throughout the whole of the South Russian steppe. Nothing is known respecting the people which erected them; and, although some of these Kurgans have been opened, no clue has been afforded to the date of their antiquity. We had only just reached the last station but one as dusk was setting in, and, to our no small disappointment, had again to listen to the old song, 'No horses to be had,'

[1] Pre-historic tombs commonly attributed to the Huns, like the Dolmens in Cornwall.—C. H.

which this time, unfortunately for us, turned out to be true. In the critical moment, however, our good angel appeared in the person of the Government Adjutant; he knew of our arrival, and ordered the postmaster to give up to us the courier-troika, to which, with our crown-padaroshna, we had no claim. We had some difficulty in stowing ourselves and our baggage into one telega, and our Cossack squeezed himself into an interstice between the hind-axle and the box, in a way which will remain a mystery to me to my dying hour. We did not reach Groznaja till after dark—a place not justifying its name, which signifies 'the terrible city;' for it differs only by its size from other stanitz, whilst the walls might be easily carried by spades and pick-axes. At its foundation no unity of opinion seems to have prevailed respecting its appellation; for although the expression is more commonly employed in the feminine gender, or *Groznaja*, others write the word *Groznyj*, which is the masculine form; and some even call the place *Groznoje*, which is the neuter termination. It would, perhaps, have been more correct, instead of *Groznaja*, to have called the town *Grjaznaja*, or 'the city of dirt.' Contrary to all expectation, we found a fairly clean inn and a tolerably good supper. The commandant of the place, to whom we paid a visit, in spite of the darkness and of the puddles in the streets, promised to procure us a conveyance and an escort to Weden.

The following morning a very primitive cart, similar to the one which brought us from Sebastopol

to Bachtchisarai, pulled up before the door; it had a hood over it, but so low that we could not sit upright in the inside; nevertheless in rainy weather the vehicle was preferable to the open telega. Scarcely had we left the place when the rain broke out with renewed violence, and in such torrents that we could only just distinguish the forms of the Tschetschentz militia, with their red baschlyks, riding at the side. We felt moved with compassion towards them, and sent the whole escort back again, it being from the first entirely unnecessary. In the present soaked condition of the road we abandoned without regret all idea of an excursion which we had projected to the camp near Wozdwishenskoje, situated to our right, and struck into the direct road leading to Weden. As good luck would have it no bridges were washed away, and we were thus able to continue our journey without obstruction through Daghestan. The rapid Argun, which, close to the small fortress of Berdykel, we crossed over by means of a long wooden bridge, threatened to carry the latter structure with it in its course towards the Terek. A few versts further on we crossed the Dshalko near the Aûl Hermendshik, famous for a victory gained by the Russians, under General Weliaminow, over the Tschetschentz. The horses laboured hard to bring us to Fort Ersenoi, at the foot of the mountains, and there the driver informed us that it was impossible any longer to fight against the weather. In this he was right, for many times the wheels had sunk up to the axletrees in mud. Fortunately for us the fort pos-

sessed a duchan unusually well supplied with provisions considering its remote position in the country; it was not only provided with sardines in tins, but also with porter, and the innkeeper prepared an excellent vegetable soup, the famous Russian schtschi. The sky, too, gradually cleared up; and stimulated by the prospect of a good *pour-boire*, our driver again harnessed the horses. The bushy steppes now ceased, and the road entered into the pleasant green valley of the Chulchulau; on both sides a space extending over a range of 400 paces (bullet range) had been cleared away in the forest; and in the background the beech-trees rose up in full glory, rendered doubly beautiful by the refreshing influence of the first autumn rains. As the water was better able to run off here than in the steppe, the road was fairly practicable, and before nightfall we arrived at the house of Prince Eristaw, the chief of the district of Weden, where we met with thorough Caucasian hospitality. The name Eristaw does not belong exclusively to one family; it was, in reality, bestowed as a title by the Grusinian kings on the governors of certain provinces (the literal translation is, head of a tribe); and since these posts were *de facto* frequently hereditary, the title remained in the family; this explains the number of Princes Eristaw to be found from Guria to Kachetia. Our host had lived many years amongst mountain tribes, and he assured me that they were easily ruled under a patriarchal form of government combined with necessary severity. The Russian Government, fully appreciating the innate

aptitude of Asiatics to administer this *régime*, has filled most of the district posts with Grusinians and other Caucasians; the only Russian whom we met with occupying a position of high authority in Daghestan was General Komaroff, commandant of the Gunib district. No disorders had occurred in this district since the subjugation of Schamyl; and only on one occasion had a fanatic, proclaiming himself Imâm, and wearing as a token the yellow schalmâ (turban), endeavoured to incite the people to insurrection. Although the number of his followers was insignificant, he became a source of trouble to the Government; but no sooner was it known that he was viewed as a *persona ingrata* by the supreme authority, than his head was speedily brought in by a party of Tschetschentz and laid before the chief of the district, who still preserves as a relic the yellow schalmâ. To our regret Prince Eristaw and his amiable wife, a native of Tiflis, were compelled to leave us, owing to a baptismal ceremony which was to take place that evening at ten o'clock, and which lasted until three in the morning. At supper Prince Tarchanow, a relative of our host, did the honours in his stead. We still expected to find some traces of Schamyl, and of the storming of the town in 1859; but nothing remained in the place to mark those events, for the Aûl Weden is destroyed, and the Russian fortress, officially called Wedgeno, is situated some hundred yards distant. This latter place is sufficiently modern and civilised to possess lighted streets, the absence of which we sorely felt at Groznaja. The posi-

tion is a very strong one; from a plateau, rich in meadows, between two streams of great depth, and surrounded on all sides by impenetrable forests, it commands the only practicable road leading into Western Daghestan. Dargô, the object of the ill-fated expedition of the year 1845, lies only eight miles eastward in a straight line, similarly surrounded in the valley of the Aksai. Thus, when the almost impassable forests and narrow defiles are borne in mind, through which the Russian retreat was conducted, the losses sustained are easily intelligible.

The next morning Weden lay enveloped in a thick fog, but the fresh atmosphere seemed to hold out the prospect of a fine day. The horses which Prince Eristaw had ordered for us were excellent, and our two Tschetschentz guides were capital fellows; one of them, who spoke a little Russian, looked a thorough German, with his light beard. Instead of taking the main road, which takes a wide bend to the west, we selected, on the advice of the prince, a less practicable but more picturesque route by Andi. We had no cause to regret our decision, as the scenery, which kept continually changing during the whole day, was amongst the most beautiful in the Caucasus. An incident at starting brought to our minds the necessity, when travelling, of paying attention to the smallest details. The ropes which our Tschetschentz had brought with them to tie on the baggage were too short, and half an hour was lost before a rope could be obtained long enough for the purpose. Travellers must be provided

with all possible requisites, and should never trust to circumstances for the smallest item. At Chorotschoi, five miles beyond Weden, we left the main road, and ascended the narrow valley of the Chulchulan, with steep rocks on each side, through the midst of luxuriant vegetation. In many places the walls approached so closely together that we had no other path but the bed of the merry stream; however, our horses were used to such tracks, and clambered up rapidly. The mist soon dispersed, and the sun, which we had not seen for many days, shone down brightly down upon us. The higher we mounted the more the beech-trees disappeared, and were replaced by green meadows enlivened by small flocks. The view which from the watershed, situated at an altitude of 6,000 feet, disclosed itself to our gaze was indescribably grand: as if by magic the green meadows vanished, and wild precipices started up intersecting fearful chasms; Daghestan was unfolding itself in the full grandeur of its wild nature: 2,000 feet below us lay the large Aúl Andi, situated in a hollow, and surrounded by perpendicular rocks; and behind, the valley of the Andi Koissu disclosed itself; and, beyond this again, mountain linked to mountain and chain to chain extended to the snow-crowned peaks which, starting out of the main chain of the Caucasus, feed the sources of the Andi and of the Avari Koissu. The picture was rendered grander still by the variety of colouring; over the valley of the Koissu hovered black, angry clouds, whilst the clear blue sky lit up the dark rocks in the neighbourhood of

Andi. The descent to Andi was not dangerous, but so steep that we alighted, and went down on foot, leaving our horses to follow us. Having reached the Aûl, we were invited to put up at a former naib (sub-chief) of Schamyl, which invitation we accepted, but found to our surprise that he was not at home. The rare opportunity was, however, afforded to us of examining a Daghestan house, and of also witnessing the manufacture of burkas, the chief industry of Andi. These Caucasian cloaks are made of long, black sheep's wool, which is felted, so as to render the inner side smooth, and to leave the outer side shaggy. The burka, when completed, forms a semicircular piece of clothing eight feet in diameter; it is attached to the neck by a strap, and is impervious to rain, which runs off without penetrating the felt. Independently of the weight, it has the disadvantage of not thoroughly covering the body, for each time that the wind shifts it must be turned towards the weather side. The manufacture of burkas is entirely a female industry. The wool is drawn out into long skeins, and is then platted and felted, as far as I could judge, by the hand. The women were not so ugly here as they generally are amongst mountain tribes, but they were disfigured by the dress which they wore, which consisted of a broad greyish-blue blouse, with pantaloons of the same material; and the heavy scaffolding of cloth on their heads did not add to their beauty. The price of a burka varies from three to ten roubles, according to size and quality; we, however, bought some good ones at five

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roubles apiece; a burka made of the finest black wool, shining like silk, and twice the size of the ordinary ones, costs thirty roubles. The total production amounts annually to 8,000 burkas. In former times Andi was a chief market in the mountain districts; and the most highly-prized commodity consisted of captives, whom the Tschetschentz brought thither after their robber excursions. This lucrative trade has, however, come to an end.

I will here add some remarks respecting the inhabitants of Daghestan, chiefly because great confusion prevails in most books with regard to their origin, their names, and their languages. My information is based upon the authoritative work of Dubrowin, who himself appeals to Herr von Uslar, the researches of which latter author are acknowledged to be reliable. It is probable, although not quite certain, that the inhabitants of Daghestan and of the southern slopes of the main chain, as far as the boundaries of the Grusinian and Tartar populations, are of common descent, or at all events are amalgamated together: their habits and customs, everywhere alike, and the uniform characteristic type—lank figures, with sharply-cut features and bold aquiline noses—points to such a conclusion. To this rule some small tribes of entirely different race—as, for instance, the Udi and the Kubatschi—form an exception. The inhabitants of Daghestan are not themselves conscious of the existence of a common origin; they have no name in common, and their perceptions do not travel beyond

the limits of their own narrow circle. The name Lesghie, used by the Russians in a general sense, and especially applicable to the inhabitants of Southern Daghestan, does not convey to the latter either the idea of a population or even of a single tribe. According to some it signifies 'mountain-dwellers,' and according to others 'robbers.' The name Didlo, assigned to them by Bodenstedt, only applies to one tribe in the west.

The Avares, who call themselves 'Maarulal' (mountain-dwellers), form the only tribe of importance occupying a somewhat prominent position; they are considered to be the most intelligent race, and the best warriors. The different communities which belong to this tribe, and which formerly constituted, politically, quite independent bodies (the Khanate of Avaria was only one of these), extend in a broad streak from the north point of Daghestan, near Tschir-jurt, to the boundary of Kachetia, near Zakataly. The number of the remaining tribes and communities is legion; many—as, for instance, Andi—consist merely of a few small villages. Previous to their subjugation some were ruled over by princes, others governed themselves, and amongst themselves endless feuds prevailed. The babel of tongues is still greater; it has never been distinctly ascertained whether a common origin exists for the hundreds of dialects; all that could be done has been to distinguish a certain number of families; these are the Avari (composed of two principal dialects), Kaziku-mychsche, Andian, Dargô, and Kurini. Besides

these there are many others which are scarcely known and but little investigated. Thus, for instance, the village of Inuch, of the tribe of Dido, in which there are only thirty families, enjoys the luxury of a language to itself, unintelligible to its neighbours. The Avari language alone possesses a kind of literature (with Arabic characters). The sound of all Daghestan languages is indescribably coarse and harsh; even the Grusinian appeared soft to me after them. A traveller, however, who understands a little Turkish will make himself understood without difficulty, for the neighbourhood of the Tartars has caused that language to be more generally known.

The tribes of Daghestan have been variously represented; according to the best authorities there seems to be a sterling foundation to their character. They still retain a somewhat savage disposition, and formerly were violent, and bloodthirsty; but, on the other hand, they possess a quality of which most Asiatics are deficient—industry. The rough nature of their country, which compelled them to utilise every available source of alimentation, has rendered them good agriculturists; and home industries, especially weaving, have attained a high degree of perfection. During the war Schamyl was even able to erect a cannon foundry. Their villages, which scarcely ever are without a mosque, consist of substantial stone houses, the want of timber obliging them to have recourse to a solid system of construction. The forms of the buildings being crude, and the villages being

situated, terrace-fashion, on mountain slopes, which prevents any pleasing regularity, causes the whole at a distance to look like a heap of ruins. Andi, though a prosperous place, forms no exception to this rule; a photograph of it, which I purchased later on at Petrowsk, often led to the question being asked in Europe whether it was not a representation of one of the destroyed Aûls of Schamyl.

Our host never having made his appearance, and there being no signs either of the promised breakfast, to which after our fatiguing ride we certainly had been looking forward with pleasure, we continued our journey with empty stomachs; the grandeur of the scenery was, however, to make up for it. We had first followed the course of the stream which, rising at some distance above Andi, discharges itself in the Andi Koissu, between Bottlich and Tkeloch; this stream does not derive its name from the Aûl, from which it is a great many miles distant, but from the district of the same name which it traverses. The valley itself was very desolate; the only signs of life being numerous coveys of partridges sporting about the clefts. We gradually ascended the right bank; the road became steeper and more stony, and finally was in such a condition that scarcely any European horse could have advanced further; but our excellent steeds seemed to consider this second pass a mere trifle, although it was quite as elevated as the first one, and notwithstanding the fatiguing journey in the morning, and the circumstance of their not having been fed at Andi. As long

as we were ascending we had only, as regards scenery, the view back of the steep walls enclosing north and east the hollow of Andi, but from the summit a new and grand panorama unfolded itself. Below us lay the hollow of Bottlich, in which stood the Aûl, surrounded with gardens and by splendid old trees; in front of us and to our left were the gloomy chasms through which the Koissu enters the hollow and again emerges from it; the main road, which we had left that morning, could be seen to our right descending in numerous zig-zags along steep walls into the valley below. The colouring was again magnificent, and a black thunder-cloud, far off in the south, seemed to come nearer to us; by instinct the horses scented the danger, and hurried onwards to get down before the rain came on. After passing the small Aûl Tschancho, situated a little below the pass-level, the descent began over a path not less arduous than the one on the other side; but our sure footed animals picked their way without hesitating down the steep and stony path, scarcely a foot wide, and with the abyss on one side, and before the dark and rain had set in, we reached the valley. The Aûl was still some versts further on; and when we rode through it fires were burning in every farm-yard, and the evening meal was being prepared. The spectacle of the wild-looking bearded figures lying couched around the flame would have delighted the heart of an artist. The house of the Commandant, a large stone building, arranged in perfectly European fashion, was situated beyond the Aûl, and night had already set in as we dis-

mounted from our horses and received a cordial welcome from Prince Orbeliani, the Vice-Commandant. The Commandant, Prince Nico Tschawtschawadze, a personage well known throughout the Caucasus, happened to be absent. I met here a French naval officer, whose acquaintance I had already made at St. Petersburg. He had started from the Caspian Sea, and had made a tour almost identical with the one which we had in project; and he was now on his way to Tiflis by Vladikawkas. On the supposition that the road, constructed at a great expense last year (1871) for the Emperor's journey, would still be practicable, he bought a tarantass at Temirchanschura and commenced his journey. He found, however, the road in such a dilapidated state that many a time his vehicle had to be carried by men over the worst parts—an assertion which sounds incredible, but which, later on, we found to be true on coming to the spot. Prince Orbeliani spoke French, and our supper went off most merrily; but the fearful storm which broke out over our heads made us apprehensive that during the following days we should encounter the same kind of weather as we had just experienced in the Steppe. However, we tried to console ourselves with the thought that the bad weather had concentrated itself about the hollow of Bottlich, and would there rage out its fury. Böttlich, in spite of its high altitude (above 3,000 feet), has a mild climate, being protected on all sides by mighty walls; magnificent chestnut trees and vines thrive there, but the fever, unfortunately, thrives there too. To arrive at

Tiflis from Bottlich the traveller may take a straight line across the mountains, instead of proceeding by the very roundabout way by Vladikawkas; the former road leads by Agualli, Tindi, Chwarschi, Ilanchewi, and Kidirô (Kederi), to Kwareli, in Kachetia, in about four to six days; according to the accounts of two travellers, with whom I am personally acquainted, the journey is very difficult and troublesome, but well worth accomplishing.

It rained the whole night, but, fortunately for us, only in the hollow of Bottlich. The next morning we left this place; trending eastward and passing through small side-valleys, we reached the banks of the Koissu at the point where it is joined by the grey waters of the stream from Andi. Both rivers were much swollen, and the Koissu produced a considerable effect, notwithstanding its brief course. The valley through which it runs was very fertile; neatly cultivated fields of corn and maize, with fine vineyards, the grape, however, being only used for eating. Right and left the walls rose up from the valley almost perpendicularly. Our guides pointed out to me the wild ravine in which Schamyl lay concealed for months after the capture of Weden. These guides were two splendid fellows. The eldest of the two, a red-haired man, of the true Daghestan type, such as Horschelt's pictures represent so accurately, had served under Schamyl. His manner of expressing himself about the subjugation of Daghestan was highly comical; he told me literally: 'Formerly we were mightily afraid of Schamyl, and now we are mightily afraid of the Russians.' The youngest was a

tall, very handsome fellow, with a fair beard and purely Teutonic features. He must have been pretty well off, for he had at least 200 roubles worth of silver about his arms and costume, the latter a faultless white tscherkesska; he also possessed two wives, as the other guide told us—under any circumstances an expensive luxury; but as a rule the custom amongst the people in the East is not to have more than one wife. They both belonged to the tribe of the Avares, and had voluntarily entered the Russian local militia; they received as pay 120 roubles a year, but had to provide their own horse and arms. Their language was the harsh Avari dialect, but they managed to converse with us perfectly by the aid of a few Russian and Turkish words; and, to our surprise, they were able to read fluently the Arabic characters on Turkish coins. Their thirst after knowledge, or rather their curiosity, was most entertaining. During the first hour of our acquaintanceship they completely exhausted all our information regarding the general position of Germany and its productions; when they heard of forty million inhabitants they came out with the very naïve question whether all these millions lived together in one Aûl. Schamyl, they said, never had more than half a million under his command. At a short distance from the Aûl Tkcloch (unpronounceable: the map simply has it Tlok), which lies hidden away most charmingly amongst orchards and vineyards, we fell in with a procession of richly clad people. These were elders of villages going to Bottlich. The elder, who belonged to Tkcloch, was also among them; but

he immediately joined our party, in order to do the honours of his Aûl. An intensely comical sight awaited us in front of the village. The male population of the place was in the Koissu endeavouring to catch the logs of timber which came floating down-stream, in order to store them away on one side. Each time the rapid current carried away a log past these fellows the latter rushed along the banks in a body and strove to intercept it lower down. The timber came from the sources of the Koissu, in the district of the Tuschs, for in Daghestan there is scarcely any.

After breakfast we took a short siesta, during which interval our two attendants performed their mid-day devotions (they were very strict in the observance of religious ordinances, and the recital of their prayers took up a great deal of time); we then continued our journey mounted on fresh horses. We cut off the long zigzags of the road by striking into a footpath, and soon reached a steep ridge which presented a splendid view of the valley of the Koissu and of a side-valley, in which were other Aûls grouped coquettishly together. A birdseye view enabled us to see with what uncommon care each spot of ground of any possible use on the mountain slopes had been, by means of walls and terraces, transformed into arable land. Some villages through which we passed struck me by their neatness and by the appearance of prosperity which prevailed. After having passed along the summit of the ridge—a certain amount of almost level road, which our second attendant, Ali, availed himself of to display some feats

of horsemanship—we came to the second portion of the ascent leading to the pass-level; but before reaching it the hour for afternoon prayer arrived. Our guides performed their devotions with a painfully rigid observance of all the ablutions. The anticipated view from the height of the pass (6,100 feet) disappointed us. The plateau of Chunsak, situated some few hundred feet below our vantage-ground, was very uniform, and in the background we could only see the peaks of the Gunib and of the grotesquely-shaped Trunk-mountain (Tschemodan-garà), which were to appear before us the following morning in a far more imposing character. A messenger had already announced our arrival at Chunsak, and our reception at the hands of the Commandant, Prince Nakaschidze, a Gurian, was most friendly. His house, too, like that of the Commandant at Bottlich, was furnished completely in the European fashion, and for the first time since Tiflis we enjoyed the luxury of sleeping in a bed. The house was not situated in the fort (a construction of the perfect modern type), but in the midst of the Aûl, at a distance of two versts—a token that the country is considered as completely pacified. The neighbourhood is, however, rich in numerous reminiscences of the struggle, and we were shown, not far from the Aûl, a steep rock from which Schamyl is supposed to have caused hundreds of refractory people to be thrown down. A curious industry flourishes exclusively at Untzukull (Onsokuli on the map), a village some miles to the north of Chunsak. The natives manufacture with great taste incrus-

tations of silver thread on wood. Prince Nakaschidze possessed a number of these objects and they served as a garniture for his writing-table. I tried, but unsuccessfully, to hunt up in the bazaar of Temirchanschura some specimens of this neat and elegant workmanship.

We had the choice, the next morning, of descending by a shorter route into the valley of the Avari Koissu, or of following the main road as far as the eastern extremity of the plateau of Chunsak. We chose the latter route, not to miss seeing the view from the border of the high plain, which we had been told was very grand. But our attendants, who cared little for the view and were anxious to get back as soon as possible, tried to lead us straight down into the valley; fortunately for us, the map showed with sufficient clearness the road which we had to follow. We sent on the baggage by the shorter route and pursued ourselves the other route. After having passed the Aûl and the Fort a refreshing six-mile gallop brought us to the border of the plateau which, at an altitude of more than 3,000 feet, breaks off almost perpendicularly into the valley of the Avari Koissu. The view surpassed our most sanguine expectations. A sea of grey clouds waved to and fro along the valleys, whilst the mountains stood forth in the brightest rays of the morning sun, from the remote snow-capped peaks of Southern Daghestan to the two grotesquely majestic rocky giants in front of us, the Gunib and the Trunk-mountain (Tschemodan-gara). I can give no better description of these mountains than by comparing them

(of course on a scale magnified tenfold) with the Königstein and the Lilienstein in Saxon Switzerland. I have made some remarks further on concerning the singular form of the Gunib. The Trunk-montain owes its name to its square-shaped summit, which breaks off in perpendicular walls, and rests on a broad massive base. The natives call it Taili-mêer, the Russians, Tschemodan-garà. The celebrated view from the rock of Karanai, beyond Himri, which Dumas describes with great apparent knowledge of the locality, must resemble, as regards general effect, the panorama from the plateau of Chunsak. The excursion to Karahai from Temirchanschura is easily accomplished in one day. We did not make use of the main road to descend into the valley; this road descends in broad zigzags; and, relying on our safe-footed horses, we preferred taking a shorter path, which, without exaggeration, was a very hazardous proceeding on our part. A thousand feet below the plateau, at an altitude of 4,635 feet above the level of the sea, we entered into the region of clouds. As if by magic a new picture disclosed itself to our gaze; the narrow, partly cultivated valley of the Avari Koissu, with the fortress of Karadagh, lay at our feet, and in front of us were dark precipices intersected by two deep chasms. On the right the valley, enclosed by steep acclivities, extends past the Aûls Koroda and Kujada as far as the western basis of the Gunib; and to our left was the mountain cleft, which we had to pass on our journey to Gunib, and which is famous throughout the Caucasus under the name of Karadachskoie-

THE TUCSK MOUNTAIN.

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uschtschelje, defile of Karadagh. The designation Karadagh (Turkish, Black-mountain) is also given to the fort in the valley, and is not altogether correct, for both have received their name from the Aûl Koroda close by. We soon reached the valley, crossed over the roaring Koissu by a stone bridge built upon one arch, and halted before the house of the Commandant of the fort. Our intention had been to proceed at once to Gunib; but Major Schabrowski's invitation to dinner was couched in such amiable terms that we willingly gave way to it. To avoid loss of time we had our baggage sent on at once. The Russian soldier ordered to escort us, to my great surprise, introduced himself in German; he turned out to be a Polish Jew, the first of his kind whom we came across, although there are said to be a great number in the Caucasus. After having rested ourselves sufficiently, and after having taken a hearty farewell of our kind host, we mounted fresh horses and continued our journey. Close behind the fort we left the main road, which could not pass through the narrow ravine, and which took a circuitous course by Murada, and we rode up the bed of a little stream rising out of the rocks to our right. The mountain-walls approached nearer and nearer until, for a distance of several hundred paces, there was only room for one rider at a time, a phenomenon recalling to mind the Pfäffers defile, in Switzerland. We fired off a shot in the middle of the ravine, which produced a thundering report. When the rains come down this cleft becomes impassable, as the stream, fed in every

direction by the barren walls of rock, swells in a few minutes to a depth of six or seven feet. So sudden is the transition that on several occasions incautious persons, riding through the ravine in bad weather, have been carried away by the torrent. The other extremity of the ravine disclosed a pleasant valley, which owed to its protected position the few green patches which it possessed, a refreshing sight amidst the barren grandeur of Daghestan. At this entrance of the cleft there is a mine which is said to produce coal; according to other accounts it only produces bituminous slate, which serves as a very indifferent fuel. A kind of path in the rocks, partly consisting of ropes, and which is used by some of the more daring inhabitants to collect wild honey, made me feel quite dizzy to look at; for although I am accustomed to mountain-climbing and am not subject to vertigo, still a real shudder passed through me at the thought that a man could be found willing thus to risk his neck for the sake of so small a gain. The altitude of the path was not considerable. Following the north-eastern declivity of the Gunib, we descended into the valley of the Kara Koissu, passing through picturesque Aûls, rich in gardens. To our right rose the mighty walls of Schamyl's last stronghold, on the furthermost projection of which—looking like an eagle's nest—had been built the house of the Russian Commandant. Having descended almost to the foot of the valley, we had to climb up again over a very troublesome zigzag course to the plateau of the Gunib, on which the Russian colony is situated. We

found, on arriving there, a small Crown-house, which had already been prepared for our reception. General Komaroff, Commander-in-Chief of the district, and also Commandant of the fort, was absent, and for the first time since Vladikawkas an opportunity was afforded to us of devoting some attention to our diaries.

The next day was entirely taken up by an examination of the famous mountain. Its shape—by no means picturesque—may be compared to a whist-table the flaps of which are not entirely let down. At one of those terrible volcanic revolutions which tore up the high plains of Daghestan a mass of rock of nearly five miles in length, and of half that width, was lifted up thousands of feet into the air, and before it became settled again it was so bent in that a long flat channel was formed in the middle, whilst the outer declivities broke off perpendicularly. A narrow undulating plateau is situated at the eastern extremity of the mountain; and a difficult but yet practicable path (now being made into a road) leads across it to the mountain. This plateau, 4,100 feet above the level of the sea, is occupied by barracks and soldiers' dwellings. Schamyl, who in the spring of 1859 had betaken himself to the mountain with the remnant of his followers, concentrated all his strength here, never supposing that anyone would venture to climb up the awful walls of rocks on the other side. He conducted the defence himself from the Aûl, situated higher up, in the middle of the actual plateau. The Russian forces occupied the valleys surrounding the mountains; their main strength was

directed against Schamyl on the eastern side. Prince Bariatinski's head-quarters were situated on a projecting hill beyond the Kara Koissu. To take the place by storm seemed impossible; to starve out the enemy was out of the question, since Schamyl possessed ample provisions to last till the winter; and a small stream rising out of the plateau supplied him with abundance of water. If the advantages gained during that year were not to be frustrated by the approach of the cold season, which would render impossible the supply of the army and the continuation of the siege, nothing remained but a *coup de main*. It succeeded. In the night of the 25th of August (September 6), a few companies of the Apscheron and of the Daghestan regiments climbed up the height by two crevices in the rock to the west and south-west, which crevices one single man could easily have defended by hurling stones down upon his assailants. At dawn of day they stood above the Aûl, and after a short fight Schamyl's Muridists, abandoning further resistance, retreated into the Aûl. The main force of the Russians now ascended the mountain from the east, and Schamyl was summoned to surrender at discretion. He is said to have long hesitated; and well may he have done so, for, after the faithlessness and cruelty displayed on his part, he could scarcely expect to have his life spared. At last he decided to appear unarmed in the presence of the conqueror. At four o'clock in the afternoon took place the memorable interview between himself and Prince Bariatinski—a subject illustrated by Horschelt in his

famous picture—and thus ended the thirty years' war in the Caucasus.

A six hours' ride brought us over all the important sites. We first ascended by a steep zigzag path, which at some places was carried over viaducts, from the lower plateau to the actual high level. Every inch of road and each ravine of the rocks have been so strongly fortified by the Russians that a re-capture of the actual Fort Gunib by the mountain tribes belongs to the realm of impossibilities, even if they succeeded in climbing up the mountain from the rear, as was once accomplished by the Russians. We followed the course of the stream, which carries away the waters of several mountain-torrents, and soon reached the historic stone of Prince Bariatinski. The picture by Horschelt, the best illustrator of the Caucasian wars, and which is also well known in Germany, represents the Prince sitting on this stone surrounded by his staff; Schamyl stands opposite to him, bending his head; and behind are some defiant-looking figures clad in chain armour, 'Chewsur militia-men true to Russia.' In the background is seen the Aûl and the walls of rock on the north border of the Gunib, whilst the foreground is filled in with Russian troops. The situation represents the end of a thirty years' war, and the stone which served as a throne to the conqueror marks the era of the subjugation of the Caucasus. The stone bears the laconic inscription—

1859. 25 *August.* 4 P.M. Prince Bariatinski.

Unfortunately, 'pietas' has caused a tasteless kiosk to

be erected over it. The Aûl lies some hundred paces further on; with the exception of the house occupied by Schamyl, it is entirely destroyed. The well-kept, terrace-shaped fields in the neighbourhood show that the cultivation of the soil is well attended to, notwithstanding the high altitude. Schamyl's house differs in no respect from other dwellings in Daghestan. The room occupied by the prophet lies at the extremity of a verandah, and is only just large enough for one person to sleep in at a time. The ground-floor only consists of stables. Not far from the house is shown the prison, a subterranean cellar, without air or light, in perfect accordance with the cold, cruel nature of Schamyl. At the time of the Emperor's visit in 1871 a tunnel had been bored through the edge of the mountain north of the village, across which tunnel a road leads to the pass of Karadagh, and at the extremity of which a picturesque view discloses itself of the valleys and the mountains to the north. This view may possibly have been the chief cause of the construction of the tunnel, for a succession of heavy rains would render the road impracticable. In order from the tunnel to reach the highest point of the Gunib to the south-west we had to re-cross the hollow above the Aûl. After little more than three-quarters of an hour we gained the point on the west side of the mountain where the daring soldiers of the Apscheron regiment executed the *coup de main* which sealed the fate of Schamyl. The Gunib here breaks off almost perpendicularly into the valley, where are situated the two Aûls, Kujada and Ko-

roda, and only a narrow stony track, where often there is hardly room for the foot to rest on the ledges of the rock, leads up to it. Schamyl considered the place so inaccessible that he did not even have it guarded. The Imperial tent (in 1871) was erected on this spot, which records one of the most heroic feats of the Russian army. A good path, serviceable for horses, had also been constructed leading up to the summit; but the Emperor did not make use of it, and only two officers of the suite ascended the height. Our horses being fresh, we availed ourselves of the opportunity, and were rewarded by a magnificent view. We could see the whole of Northern Daghestan. The higher mountains were already clad in their winter garb, whilst the summit of the Gunib (7,950 feet) was free from snow, and the atmosphere around us was as warm as in summer. In front of us, to the west, was the grotesque figure of the Trunk-mountain (Tschemodan-garà). The base of the Gunib lay surrounded by deep valleys, into which we looked down in almost a perpendicular line. The view would have possessed a twofold charm for a geologist; even we laymen could distinctly discern how the original high plateau had been convulsed by volcanic action, the strata displaced and the valleys washed away by the furrowing power of the water. We lingered a long time up there. On our return we passed the cleft on the south side of the mountain where the Daghestan regiment, not yielding in intrepidity to the other regiment, had climbed up the height. When we reached our quarters the successors of these heroes were

engaged in a very matter-of-fact afternoon drill. We dined at the house of the Commander-in-Chief, General Komaroff, which edifice, rising from the edge of the rock, overhangs like an eagle's nest the Kara Koissu. The view from the balcony into the abyss below is quite awful. When taking leave our hosts wished us very fine weather for our ride to Temirchanschura; but this pious vow was not destined to be realised.

The next morning it poured with rain, a bad omen in a country where a heavy downpour will cut off communication between whole tracts of land. We had been advised not to take the shorter route (58 miles) to Temirchanschura *viâ* Gergebil and Aimaki, for fear it should turn out to be impassable; the longer route, *viâ* Chodshalmachi, would, we were told, at any rate be practicable, and for 28 miles it had the additional advantage of being a carriage-road. Our main object was to reach Temirchanschura and Petrowsk as quickly as possible, as the steamer was to leave the latter place on the next day but one (October 11) for Bakù. If we missed the steamer we had no other course but to remain idle for eight days at Petrowsk, or to trust ourselves again in the soaked condition of the road to the mercies of the telega, neither of which alternative was pleasant to contemplate. We therefore begged the loan of a carriage for the first 28 miles to Chodshalmachi, and we requested that notice should be sent in advance to the stations further on to have relays of horses in readiness. Both requests were readily granted, and we had every reason to hope that by means of a

forced march we should reach Temirchanschura that evening, notwithstanding the 80 miles' distance. All went well at first. At 5 A.M. a roomy, comfortable tarantass stopped at our door, drawn by five sturdy trooper's horses, and driven by two soldiers, the one from the box and the other from the saddle. We descended in long zigzags, at a sharp trot, from the Fort into the valley of the Kara Koissu, and a well-constructed bridge led us across the latter. The road, which was in tolerable repair, ran along the right bank of the river as far as the famous Saltinski bridge, so called after the Aûl Salty, situated on the mountains to the right. This bridge is regarded as one of the wonders of the Caucasus, and we were anxious to see it. However, we were not spared a disillusion; for the so-called bold bridge, which, according to our military attendants, connected together the two banks of the river at a height of several hundred feet above the water, is nothing more nor less than an ordinary iron lattice-work; and in order to destroy any vestige of picturesque appearance it had been painted red. The position is certainly grand, for the Koissu, 80 feet below the road, foams beneath, hemmed in by abrupt rocks. When the Emperor passed this spot in 1871 the bridge was hung over with tapestry, and the breakfast-tent was erected upon it. On that occasion the scenery was enlivened by the presence of thousands of horsemen, and the eye was probably more agreeably affected than at the time of our visit. Three different roads branched off at the bridge: the road to

Murada, and further on to Karadagh and Chunsak, crossed the bridge; the road to Gergebil (the shorter route to Temirchanschura, mentioned above) ran in a straight line, descending the valley; and to our right was the road to Chodshalmachi, across the pass of Kuppa. We took the latter route, and ascended by long zigzags. The road had not much suffered from the rain, and we proceeded rapidly; the weather too cleared up, and we obtained some very pretty views. Chodshalmachi is charmingly situated in the midst of luxuriant gardens—a perfect oasis in this mountain wilderness. The Kazikumy Koissu, the fourth branch bearing the name Koissu, flows through the valley, and unites itself some nine miles further on with the Kara Koissu, and afterwards with the Avari Koissu; the latter river, together with the Andi Koissu, near Himri, the birthplace of Schamyl, forms the Sulak, which discharges itself into the sea north of Petrowsk. At a short distance before Chodshalmachi, the Kazikumy Koissu disappears for a while under its bed of rocks, like the 'Perte du Rhône,' at Geneva. On arrival at the bridge an officer of militia made his appearance with fresh horses; in a few minutes we had our saddles unpacked, the horses saddled, our baggage fastened on, and everything ready for continuing the journey. Then arose the first serious difficulty: the road, which led eastward across a moderately high pass, was composed of a clayey soil, so soaked through that the horses could only proceed at the slowest possible pace, and were continually slipping. The probability

of our reaching Temirchanschura that evening became fainter and fainter, and it was 2 P.M. when we started from the Kutischi post, where we changed horses for the first time. A short cut leads from here to Derbend, passing Dischlagar; but we were obliged to take the Temirchanschura route, as Alī was awaiting us there with the baggage. The country now presented a barren aspect, and the mountains decreased in height. Our spirits too became depressed, for everything seemed to conspire against us: the sky was again overcast, the baggage lagged behind, and our horses were so small that even when the girths were taken up to the last hole the saddles sat loose, a circumstance which caused one of my travelling companions to have a fall, fortunately without serious consequences. At Urmi, a rather large Aûl, we were kept waiting some time for our baggage, which had remained behind. The elder of the village invited us very hospitably to take tea with him, and we reached his room, which had a comfortable appearance, after crossing over several roofs railed in by a parapet of manure-bricks. About sunset we contrived to make a re-start. The elder of the village, who, like all Orientals, was a man of superior manners, such as is not the case amongst European peasants, insisted on escorting us—a kindness which eventually cost him dearly. Scarcely had we got over a short distance of the 50 versts which separated us from Temirchanschura when a storm burst forth such as I never experienced again. A tempest, with torrents of rain and impenetrable darkness, converted our ride into a fearful

undertaking. The elder had promised that he would see us to the Aûl Dshingutai, 29 versts from Urmi, and he made a point of honour not to forsake us now. What the country may have resembled which we traversed is quite unknown to me; it was so dark that we had to abandon all attempt to guide our horses; and slackening the reins, we left them to find their own way after the guide, who could not be recognised at a distance of five paces in front. From time to time a flash of lightning disclosed a deep abyss close to the slanting road. Ever and anon we fell in with shepherds who had taken refuge under overhanging rocks, and whose wild-looking countenances shone demon-like in the light of the blazing fires. Then again we rode through rapid streams, and ignorant of their depth heard the rush and roar of the waters flowing by. Yet notwithstanding all these adventures we reached Dshingutai, after a six hours' march, with no greater mishap than that of being soaked to the skin. Here we found that the relay of horses, which had been held in readiness for us until late in the afternoon, had been sent away again, as our arrival in such weather was deemed impossible. We were, however, so thoroughly wet through that we preferred to push on the remaining fourteen miles, and to enjoy a good rest at Temirchanschura, where our arrival was expected. On taking leave of our brave guide we expressed our best thanks to him, and at midnight resumed our journey. But scarcely had we left the village when our new attendants disappeared. They may possibly have lost sight of us in

the darkness, but it is more probable that they considered a warm room preferable to a ride by night through storm and rain; a youth who had charge of the horse with the baggage alone stuck to us. He knew nothing beyond his mother tongue, Avari, neither did he seem to know the way. We had, therefore, solely to trust to our horses, and these never deviated from the right path, in spite of the thick mud, which had transformed the road and fields into one deep swamp. We greeted with loud hurrahs the sight of the telegraph poles along the Derbend road, which joined our road from the right. We now felt certain that we were in the vicinity of Temirchanschura, and could not possibly miss the way. At last, about 3.30 A.M., we entered the dark streets of the town. We were not aware that it possessed an hotel, and we rode on without any apparent object until we finally came to a sentry. How we got sheltered later on I would rather leave unmentioned, not to cast a slur at the very last on Caucasian hospitality, which hitherto had been always extended to us most profusely and with such amiability. I will only add that the next morning, after barely four hours' sleep, we were given notice to quit our quarters. We certainly thought that after an eighteen miles' journey we had a claim to more rest. A droschky, which even here was very good, brought us to the post-station, where Ali received us with great joy; he had faithfully conveyed our baggage over almost impracticable roads, but at the last

had been obliged to have six extra horses put on to the telega.

As Temirchanschura possessed no sights worth seeing we at once ordered horses for the journey to Petrowsk, and succeeded fortunately in obtaining a tarantass, so that this time we were spared the miseries of a telega. I should mention for the benefit of future travellers that the town possesses an hotel, but I know nothing about its merits or demerits. Temirchanschura is the seat of a governor, and the name is generally abbreviated into Chura; Karanai is situated close by; it possesses the celebrated view which Dumas has described, and which is said to be in no way inferior to the plateau of Chunsak. The excursion to Karanai is easily performed in one day, and in fine weather can be recommended to all travellers. We left the town at 1 P.M. There was little attraction in the low, barren ranges of heights, yet some Aûls on the slopes looked picturesque. The last mountain chain is cut through by the Schuraôzen, swollen in consequence of the heavy rains; the road follows the course of the river, and soon reaches the station Kumtor-Kaleh, near to a fortified Aûl situated on a bold mountain projection. At this point the Steppe commences, and far away in the distance can be seen the blue streak of the Caspian Sea. The authorities of the station seemed to have been apprised of our arrival; for, although we required ten horses for our two vehicles, the change of horses was accomplished in a few minutes. The road to Petrowsk was in good con-

dition, and the Yamtschiks dashed away at a smart gallop. At the gates of Petrowsk we were received by the Police-master with the customary escort of Cossacks, and that official relieved our minds from all anxiety regarding night-quarters by assigning to us a spacious room in the club of the place.

Our first care was to ascertain the time of departure of the steamer; but all the information which we could obtain was that the steamer had not yet arrived from Astrachan, and that the hour of her departure could not be fixed, on account of the bad weather. During the following two days which we had to wait in Petrowsk our chief occupation consisted in drying our things, a performance, in spite of a roaring kitchen-fire, only partially successful. We could not venture upon any excursions in the neighbourhood, for fear of missing the steamer; and as the town itself had nothing to offer but *ennui* we occupied ourselves with our diaries. Petrowsk is essentially a modern creation. A neck of land projecting to the north suggested the idea of a favourable anchorage, and the Government constructed a harbour, which, though small, is nevertheless commodious. It is protected by two long moles extending into the sea. Thus Petrowsk is the port of entry for all goods shipped from the Wolga to the Caucasus, communication existing with the interior of the Caucasus *viâ* Vladikawkas. Bakù is the channel of trade for the eastern portions of the Caucasus, although the Wolga is the chief highway of Russian trade; and the Fair of Nishnij-Nowgorod

causes an enormous amount of goods to circulate; yet notwithstanding these advantages Petrowsk, from a want of good means of communication with the interior, has not yet acquired the importance in the east which Poti has already attained in the west. The continuation of the Rostoff-Vladikawkas Railway across the Steppe to Petrowsk is in contemplation. This line would not be expensive, and would exercise a great influence on the traffic of the port. Steam communication on the Caspian (passenger traffic exclusively) lies chiefly in the hands of the Wolga Steam Ship Company:—'Caucasus and Mercury.' The company's steamers run twice a week in the summer-time from Astrachan to Bakû, and once a week from Bakû to Astrabad, in the south-east corner of the Caspian, calling at Lenkoran, Astara, Enzeli (port of Rescht, in Persia), and Mesched-i-sir; in winter the journeys are reduced to one-half the number, and during some months communication with Astrabad is suspended on account of the ice. One of the drawbacks to traffic consists in the small depth of water at the mouths of the Wolga; passengers and goods from Astrachan have to be towed many miles out to sea in lighters and reshipped on board the steamers lying at anchor. The roadsteads, too, along the Persian coast are very dangerous in bad weather; and vessels from Bakû have been known to return there after ineffectual attempts to land passengers and cargo in Persian ports. Petrowsk bears the stamp of a Russian provincial town: broad streets, low houses, and little animation.

The town is commanded by a rather extensive fort, next to which is a lighthouse, built exclusively of iron, and constructed in France. At a distance of some versts behind the town are the promontories of Daghestan, low chains, thinly interspersed with pine-trees. The country was formerly under the sway of the Chamchal of Tarku, who sprang from an old reigning family, very powerful in former times. Tarku is situated not far from the town; it was at one time commanded by the Russian fortress Burnoje, the scene of a fearfully bloody siege carried on by the mountain tribes.

I have seldom seen a town where the expression of *ennui* is so indelibly stamped upon the face of the whole population as at Petrowsk. For instance, almost the entire contingent of the garrison not actually on duty were on the jetty throwing stones at the fishes swimming about in multitudes. These fishes must have had something the matter with them, for they kept almost on the top of the water, and seemed unable to dive beneath the surface. Frightened by the stones, they dashed towards the shore and allowed themselves to be caught by the hand. At last we could find nothing better to do than to join in this interesting occupation; but although the article of fish appeared to be so plentiful in the town, nothing but tough beef could be obtained at the club. The amount of dirt displayed in this latter establishment was so appalling that we fancied ourselves back on the road between Urmi and Temirchanschura, with this difference, that the dirt of

the latter place, being of a purely mineral nature, was infinitely preferable; it was, in fact, the distinction which the Irishman draws between 'clean dirt' and 'dirty dirt.' On the evening of the third day (October 12) we espied, to our inexpressible relief, the lights of a steamer entering the harbour; and, an hour later, we found ourselves safe on board the 'Turkomaun.' The price of tickets and baggage was, in the absence of competition, so exorbitant that the tariff was worthy to rank on a par with that of any hotel of the Caucasus.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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